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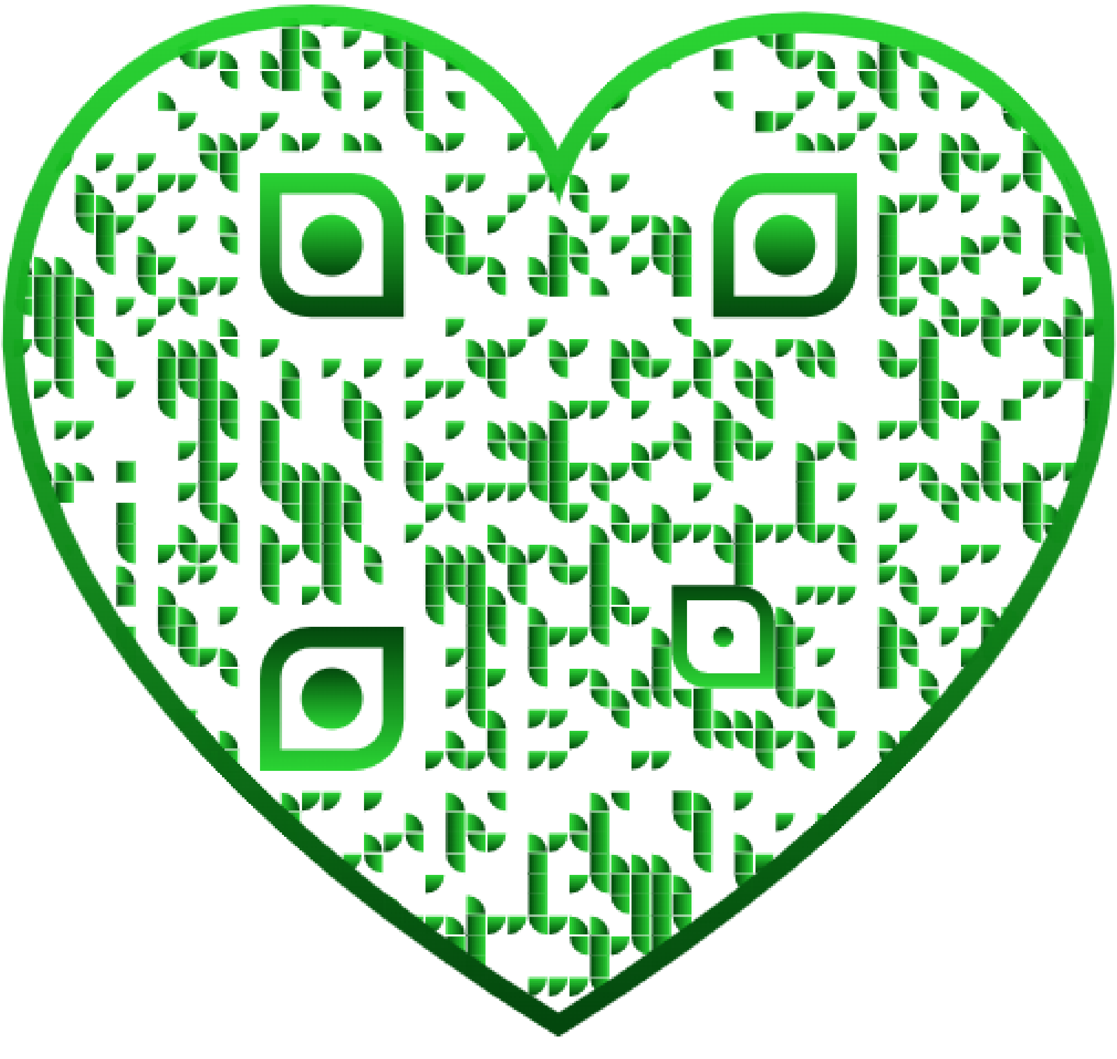

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this week in bella

PARTY WITH PUDSEY

TV's biggest names join forces for an unmissable charity night

Get ready for one of TV's most heartwarming nights. *Children in Need* is back, and this year's line-up is seriously star-studded! Rochelle Humes, Paddy McGuinness, Mel Giedroyc, Big Zuu and Lenny Rush are all gearing up to host an evening packed with unforgettable moments. With last year's jaw-dropping £39.2 million raised, the pressure's on to top it, and we can't wait to see what surprises are in store.

Expect lots of feel-good fun as well as a few tears, with sketches from BBC favourites *The Apprentice* and *Gladiators*, plus moving performances and heart-melting appeal films highlighting the important work the charity does for young people. BBC Radio 2 presenter Sara Cox is getting in on the action, taking on the epic Great Northern Marathon Challenge, in which she will run an incredible 135 miles over five days, aptly finishing in Pudsey, Leeds. Turn to page 12 for our exclusive interview with Sara.

Prepare for an uplifting, unmissable evening that brings the whole nation together on 14 November.

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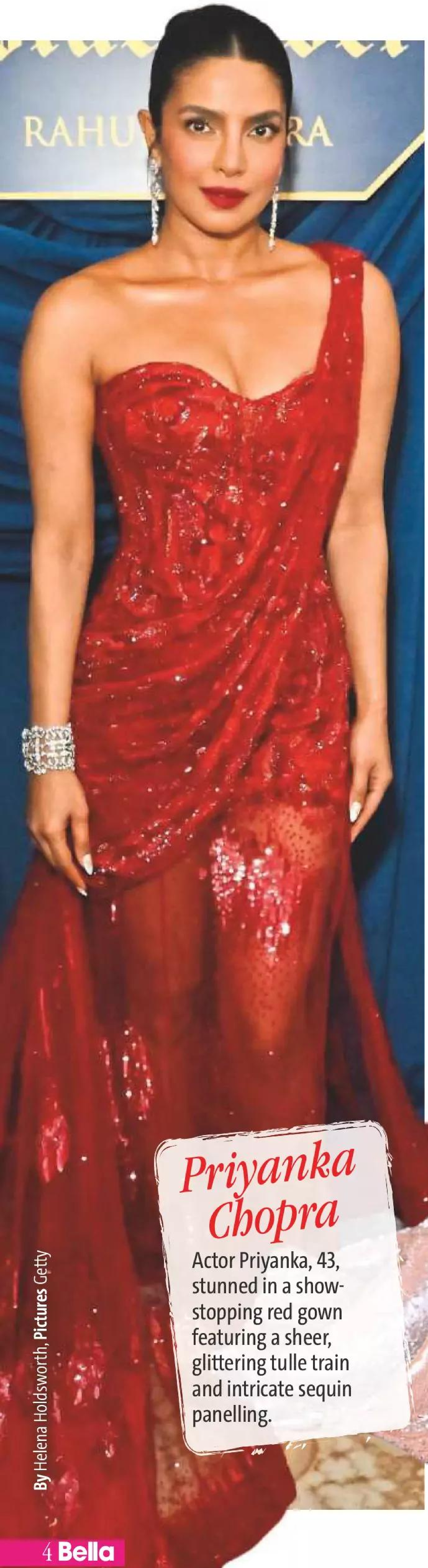
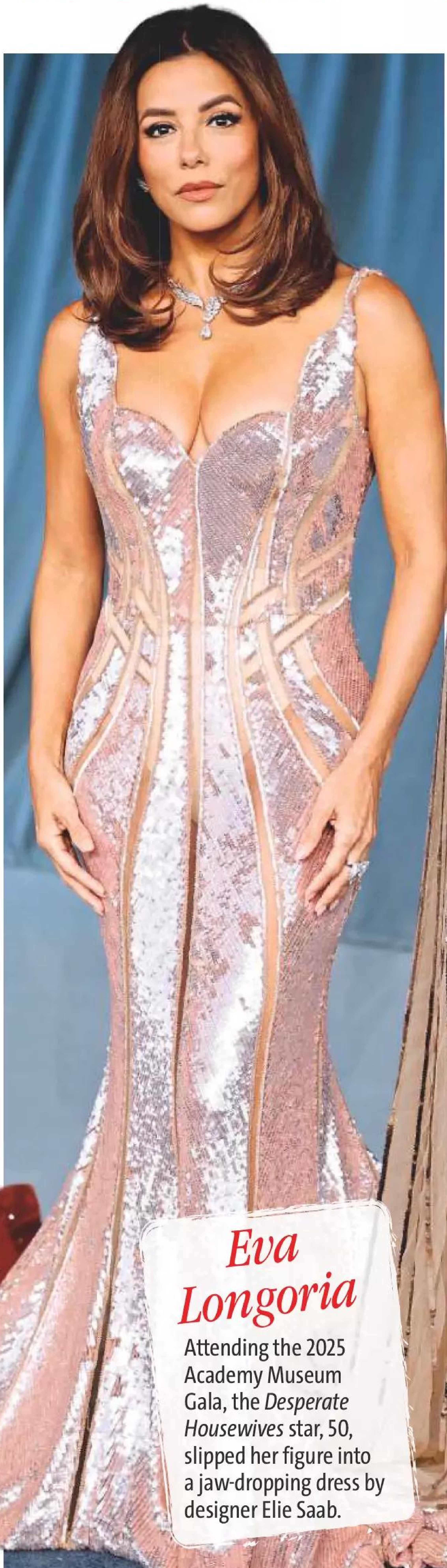
By Ramla Jeylani, **Pictures** Getty, Alamy, BBC **Cover pictures:** Getty, Shutterstock

All that gl



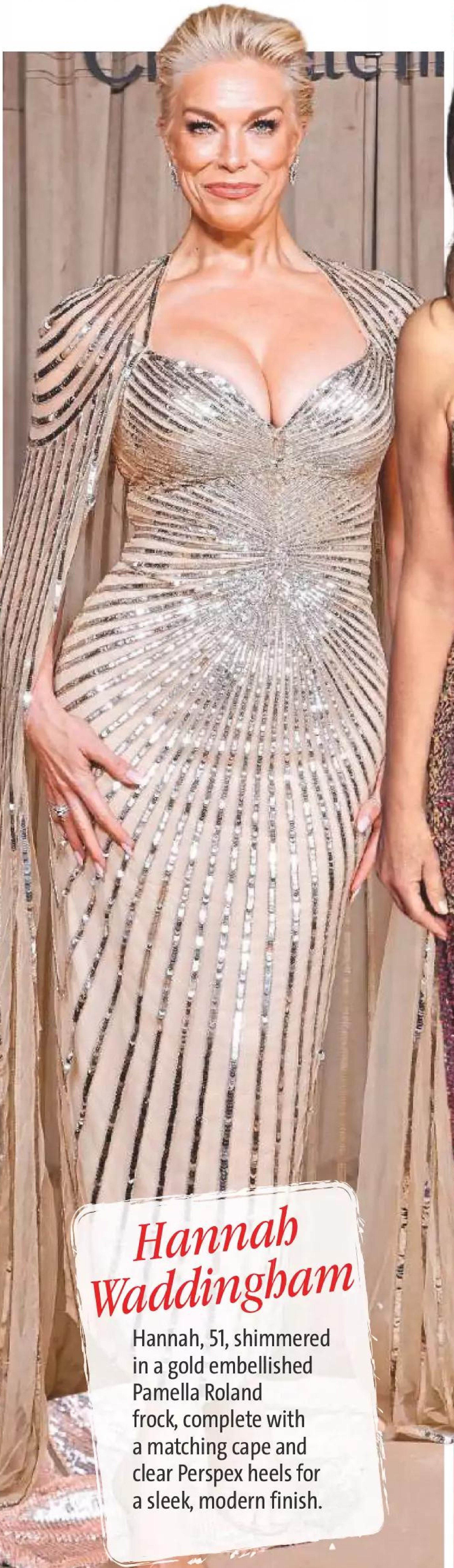
Priyanka Chopra

Actor Priyanka, 43, stunned in a show-stopping red gown featuring a sheer, glittering tulle train and intricate sequin panelling.



Eva Longoria

Attending the 2025 Academy Museum Gala, the *Desperate Housewives* star, 50, slipped her figure into a jaw-dropping dress by designer Elie Saab.



Hannah Waddingham

Hannah, 51, shimmered in a gold embellished Pamella Roland frock, complete with a matching cape and clear Perspex heels for a sleek, modern finish.

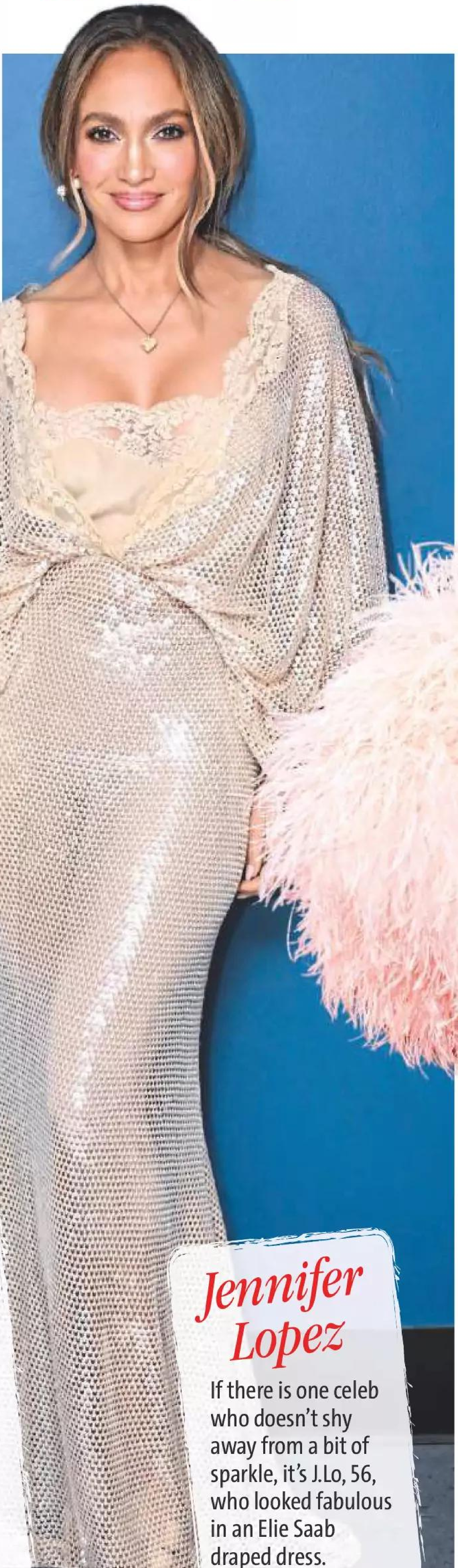
By Helena Holdsworth, **Pictures** Getty

itters

Sequins are stealing the spotlight as celebrities dazzle in shimmering, high-glamour looks...

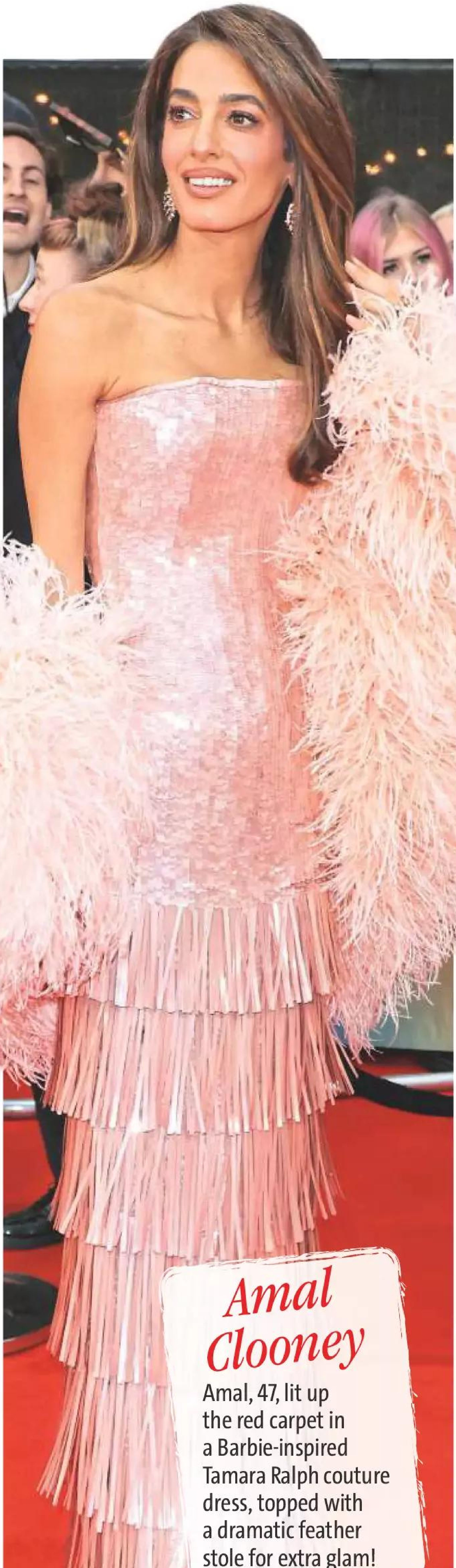
Elizabeth Hurley

Liz, 60, looked sensational at the Attitude Awards in a figure-hugging pink sequin wrap gown, which featured a high-leg split and plunging neckline.



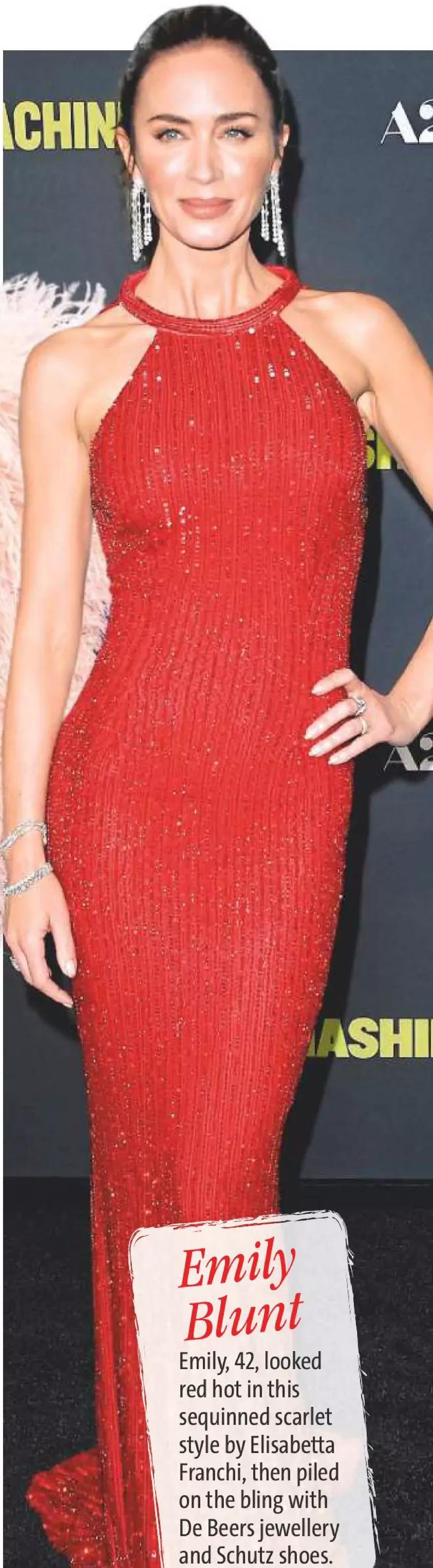
Jennifer Lopez

If there is one celeb who doesn't shy away from a bit of sparkle, it's J.Lo, 56, who looked fabulous in an Elie Saab draped dress.



Amal Clooney

Amal, 47, lit up the red carpet in a Barbie-inspired Tamara Ralph couture dress, topped with a dramatic feather stole for extra glam!



Emily Blunt

Emily, 42, looked red hot in this sequinned scarlet style by Elisabetta Franchi, then piled on the bling with De Beers jewellery and Schutz shoes.

Kaye fights back

After being suspended from her BBC radio show over allegations of 'bullying', Kaye Adams has described the ordeal as 'three of the most distressing weeks of my professional life'. In a public statement, the presenter, 62, revealed, 'Seeing my previously untarnished name publicly dragged through the mud, BBC Scotland has still not provided me with any details of the allegations which have been made against me.'

Kaye also denied reports that she 'stormed out' of a meeting with a BBC Scotland executive. The broadcaster was taken off air from her morning programme last month, after an anonymous complaint was received about her behaviour. And while the *Loose Women* panellist reportedly has the backing of ITV, the daytime show is going through its own tumultuous time amid mass ITV cuts across the network.

SIMON'S MARRIAGE MYSTERY

Fans are convinced that Simon Cowell and Lauren Silverman have finally said 'I do'

They've been together for around 12 years – and now Simon Cowell and Lauren Silverman have sparked rumours that they've finally tied the knot. Tongues started wagging that Lauren, 48, said 'I do' to the music mogul, 66, when she deleted her old Instagram account and set up a new one under the name of 'LaurenMichelleCowell'.

The page has been followed by many of the couple's closest friends – including Cheryl, Lauren Sánchez Bezos, and Simon's *Britain's Got Talent* co-stars Alesha Dixon and Amanda Holden. While the account is private, its bio reads that Lauren is 'mom to Adam and Eric'. Adam is her 19-year-old son from her marriage to Andrew Silverman and she shares 11-year-old Eric with Simon.

Originally meeting in Barbados in 2004, the pair's romance was confirmed when news of Lauren's pregnancy spread in July 2013. Eight years later, Simon romantically whisked his then-girlfriend back to the Caribbean to pop the question. Tellingly, the *American Idol* judge had been vocal about taking the lead in the wedding preparations. 'I'm planning it all, otherwise I know what will happen – there will be 600 people and it'll get out of control, like my 50th birthday party,' he said in 2022. 'No one knows when it's going to be. That will be a surprise, even for Lauren.' He added, 'I don't want to have one of these ghastly wedding planners and all the arguments, like who you do invite and who you don't invite. The whole thing just seems like too much hassle.'

MICHAEL'S JAB SLIM-DOWN

Michael McIntyre is the latest celebrity to admit to taking weight-loss jabs, after doctors warned him that he was obese. Speaking at a London show, the comedian, 49, revealed he'd weighed 15st 10lb prior to starting the jabs.

After dabbling with Ozempic, he has since switched to Mounjaro, and has already shed the pounds just three weeks in. 'Have you noticed how tiny I am? I have lost weight,' Michael said. 'Don't applaud it, because there is a little bit of cheating that has gone on! The doctor told me I was "obese". How rude. He said, "It's a medical term!"'

Meghan and Harry's pumpkin playdate

Prince Harry and Meghan Markle have been getting into the autumnal spirit by taking their children to the local pumpkin patch. In a video shared with her 4.2 million Instagram followers, Meghan, 44, showed Archie, six, and four-year-old Lilibet running riot on their family day out. Joined by her mum Doria Ragland, Harry, 41, even tried his hand at pumpkin carving!

The happy outing came after it was revealed that Meghan had lost her 10th publicist in five years. Emily Robinson, a senior figure poached from Netflix, left the duchess after just three months.

By Sophie Cockerham, **Pictures** Getty Images, FilmMagic

Lily reveals all

After a seven-year hiatus from music, Lily Allen is back with what some are calling the 'divorce album of the decade'. *West End Girl* details the breakdown of her five-year marriage to David Harbour, 50, after discovering his alleged three-year affair.

While Lily, 40, has described the album as 'a mixture of fact and fiction', it has since been claimed that 'Madeline' – the younger colleague accused of having a relationship with *Stranger Things* actor David – is a pseudonym for Netflix costume designer Natalie Tippett.

The former couple, who married in Las Vegas in 2020, have now reportedly listed their Brooklyn townhouse for a staggering $8 million.

WEEK IN PICS

Natalie's night out

Natalie Cassidy celebrated husband Marc Humphreys' 40th birthday at a swanky London restaurant. Accompanied by their daughter Joanie, nine, and Natalie's daughter Eliza, 14, from a previous relationship, they posed with her *Cooking with the Stars* co-star Elliott Grover.

Stacey hits Hollywood

Stacey Solomon swapped Pickle Cottage for the bright lights of Hollywood. The TV personality, 36, was 'bl**dy proud' to support her sister Jemma's label making business Stateside, describing the trip as 'food for my soul'.

Our new fave duo!

Michelle Keegan and Reese Witherspoon, 49, celebrated the *Legally Blonde* star's new book. The novel is co-authored with Harlan Coben, who the former *Corrie* actor, 38, worked with on Netflix series *Fool Me Once*.

Kate is taking Beatrice and Eugenie under her wing

Kate's pr and 'isol

As pressure rises for Prince Andrew and his family to be banished, sources tell *Bella* that loyal Kate has vowed to guide Beatrice and Eugenie through the storm

With Prince Andrew and Sarah Ferguson facing public backlash and the loss of their royal titles following the Jeffrey Epstein scandal, new rumours continue to rock the palace and cause pain and embarrassment to the duo's beloved daughters, Princesses Beatrice and Eugenie.

Nevertheless, with pressure mounting for Andrew, 65, and Fergie, 66, to leave their residence Royal Lodge, Beatrice, 37, and Eugenie, 35, have so far refused to speak out against their parents – with reports suggesting some are encouraging them to give up their birthright titles of princess to distance themselves from the controversy.

'Mistakes weren't theirs'

But *Bella* learns they have at least one crucial royal ally to turn to in their despair as Kate Middleton, 43, shows her loyalty, despite feeling 'under pressure' to step away from the scandal.

Stepping in to ensure they are not completely exiled, she is determined both women are shown kindness in their time of need. A source tells us, 'Kate feels terrible for Beatrice and Eugenie. She doesn't think they should be suffering for their parents' actions and she's made sure to let them know. She and William both believe it's unfair for the princesses to be punished for mistakes that weren't theirs.' And with reports that Prince William is choosing to publically distance himself from the whole sorry situation, Kate has vowed to 'never walk away'.

'Kate's told the Princesses they'll always have a place at the

The princesses 'don't want to turn' on mum Fergie

Exclusive

omise to ‘pained’ ated’ princesses

Beatrice and Eugenie won’t be exiled by the royals

Andrew and Fergie gave up their royal titles

table, even if their parents are being banished,’ says our source. ‘They’ll still be invited to family holidays, though understandably it may be tough for them to come when their parents aren’t welcome. This is the most bewildering and painful thing the girls have ever endured so Kate’s kindness has meant the world to them. They’ve been feeling so isolated and unsure where they stand within The Firm. To have her step in and reassure them has meant the world.’

Our insider adds that other members of the family further afield have also reached out. ‘Meghan and Harry have been in touch as well to offer their support. Even though Andrew and Sarah are being cut off by pretty much everyone, Beatrice and Eugenie are still well-loved.’

A source tells *Bella* that William, 43, who is known to have a good relationship with his cousins, has deliberately taken a step back from conversations about the dismissal of Andrew and his family in a bid to stay loyal to Beatrice and Eugenie. This is despite previously challenging his father, King Charles, to strip Andrew of his titles.

‘They are still well-loved’

The insider says, ‘William’s plan for now is to walk away from the scandal and keep a careful distance from his cousins whilst everything with their parents is still unfolding. But that doesn’t mean he’s turning his back on them. He’s made it clear to people inside the palace that his cousins should still feel welcome and included, and Kate’s been the one quietly making sure that happens.

‘The girls have always had a tough time when it comes to their parents. Before Andrew got caught in this Epstein scandal it was Sarah that was embarrassing them. She was seen as the black sheep and laughing stock of the family. When they were kids, Beatrice and Eugenie used to cry to William and Harry about it all the time and both boys were very sympathetic.

‘They’ve always had a lot of support from the brothers. Of course, it is more complicated for William in this situation because he’s now in a place where he must carefully consider how every little thing will be perceived by the public. This is an ugly scandal, and he can’t be seen to be soft on his uncle and aunt in any way, or he will risk incurring major blowback.’

Luckily for both William and his cousins, his wife Kate is not bowing to pressure from palace advisors to lay low and is showing kindness in their time of anguish. ‘Kate has let it be known she wants to get the sisters out to some charitable events when the time is right, as a way to remind the public of all the good they do and have done,’ our source says. ‘Kate’s a very loyal person, but it’s such a quickly evolving situation so they’ve all agreed the best thing to do is wait and see how it all unfolds before making any public moves, but the dialogue is open, and Kate has made it clear they won’t be cast aside.’

‘Beatrice and Eugenie both understand how delicate it all is so they’re not pushing anything, they’re just so relieved to be getting these assurances. Not that it isn’t still massively painful for them. Their parents are suffering, no child wants to witness that, no matter how deserved it might be. They don’t want to be tasked with trying to beg for mercy on behalf of their parents. But they also love their mum and dad and don’t want to turn on them, so it’s really tough. Kate’s kindness is making it at least bearable for the girls.’

William is keeping a ‘careful distance’

By Samuel McManus, **Pictures** WireImage, Getty Images

Exclusive

TESS: INSIDE HER SHOCK £1M this morning MOVE

As she steps down from over 20 years on *Strictly Come Dancing*, Tess Daly – and her husband Vernon Kay – are being courted for a huge deal at ITV…

The couple are closer than ever

Claudia and Tess have stepped down from *Strictly*

The TV industry was left stunned last month as Tess Daly stepped down from her role on *Strictly Come Dancing* after a staggering 21 years. A staple of the Saturday night entertainment show, the presenter, 56, said in a statement, '*Strictly* will forever hold a special place in my heart – but it does feel like the right time to hand over the reins.'

And while fans pondered what her next career move might be, insiders tell *Bella* that Tess is already being tempted by a big-money deal at ITV – as bosses try to convince her to take over the helm at *This Morning*. And it's not just Tess that producers are courting – as her husband of 22 years, Vernon Kay, is also said to be in the picture to host the flagship daytime TV show alongside her.

Our source says, 'There's serious interest. ITV know they need warmth, credibility and connection. Tess and Vernon tick every box – and the deal is thought to be worth seven figures. They're charming, relatable, and real. Viewers loved Richard [Madeley] and Judy [Finnigan] because you could see their connection was genuine – and Tess and Vernon have that same spark.'

'They're charming and real'

Meeting in 2001, Vernon proposed to Tess on Christmas Day the following year, and the pair walked down the aisle in September 2003. They are proud parents to daughters Phoebe, 21 – who has appeared in magazine shoots with her dad – and 16-year-old Amber.

'Tess and Vernon bring a wholesome energy,' the source continues. 'People trust them – and that's gold dust. They make each other laugh without trying. Vernon's playful, Tess keeps him grounded – it's effortless.'

Beginning her TV career in 1999, Tess joined the late Sir Bruce Forsyth as a *Strictly* host from its inception in 2004. Brucie stepped down from his role nine years later, and was replaced by Claudia Winkleman – and the pair made history as the first all-female presenting duo on a primetime entertainment show.

Tess and Vernon with eldest daughter Phoebe

As Claudia, 53, resigned from co-hosting position at the same time as Tess, the insider says both women are 'determined to go out on a high.' The source explains there'll be 'no tears, just joy. They want to celebrate everything *Strictly* has meant to them.'

But after over two decades, the insider says it's no wonder Tess is looking forward to having her weekends back. 'She had to miss birthdays and family events. Now Tess finally gets to say 'yes' to life outside the studio – she can actually have a Saturday night off!

'Tess has been in the *Strictly* bubble for so long. She adores live television and she's also ready for a new challenge. She's not chasing fame – she's earned that – but she's open to projects that excite her. The idea of working with Vernon on their own terms, and reconnecting with viewers in a more personal way, is very tempting.'

'Deals can change overnight'

Like his wife, Vernon is also an accomplished presenter. Shooting to fame on *T4* in 2000, he went on to present huge shows such as *All Star Family Fortunes*. He finished in third place on 2020's *I'm a Celebrity… Get Me Out of Here!*, and now has his own BBC Radio 2 show. Fans will also know that the 51-year-old has been a guest presenter on *This Morning*, appearing in the past alongside Rochelle Humes.

'This could catapult Vernon right back into the big time,' the source admits. 'He's still got that cheeky charisma viewers love – he just needed the right platform.'

Before the last 18 months, *This Morning* had been in turmoil for some time. Once the glittering jewel in ITV's crown, it was fronted by former best friends Phillip Schofield and Holly Willoughby for 14 years before they both resigned separately in 2023.

After a series of guest presenters, Ben Shephard and Cat Deeley took over in March last year. But as *Bella* reported last month, Cat – who split with her husband of 12 years, Patrick Kielty, earlier this year – wants to step away from the show once her contract ends next spring. Now bosses are said to be scrambling to find a replacement.

Interestingly, it's been rumoured that Holly is being courted by the BBC for Tess's old job on *Strictly* – but insiders also say she could be in the running for a *This Morning* return. And with their combined experience, Tess and Vernon aren't taking anything as gospel until they've signed a contract. Our insider continues, 'That's the way this industry works. Tess and Vernon know deals can change overnight. They will make decisions that work for them and their daughters. But one thing's for sure – Tess and Vernon are back on everyone's radar. Tess isn't moving away from television. She's stepping into a new chapter – and this time, Vernon's right beside her.'

Holly Willoughby could replace Tess on *Strictly*

By Nathan Kay and Sophie Cockerham, **Pictures** Getty Images, Shutterstock, BBC, Instagram/Phoebe Kay, ITV

PUDSEY
RULES

Sara is running 135 miles for Children in Need

‘They’ out m

Ahead of her Childre
Bella about the US
which songs a radio

She’s one of the UK’s most well-loved DJs, but Sara Cox is now swapping the radio booth for running shoes, as she takes on a mammoth task for Children in Need. Aiming to cover 135 miles in five days, Bolton-born Sara tells *Bella* that her greatest fear is finishing the challenge across the Pennines in Leeds.

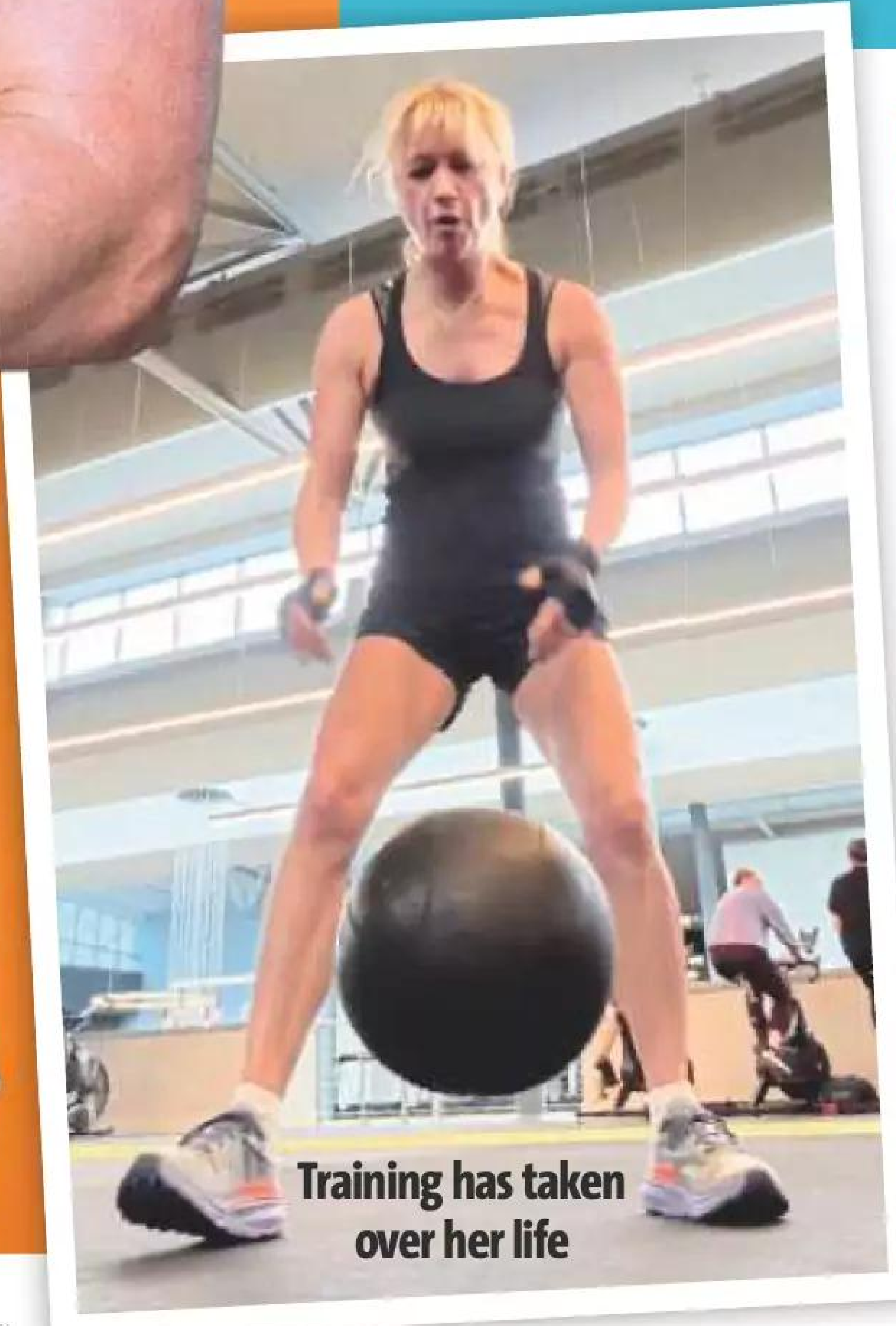
‘Will they let me into Yorkshire?’ she asks. ‘Because I keep taking the mickey out of them on the radio… I have done all my career! But my daughter [Lola] is at uni in Leeds – she absolutely loves it, it’s a great city.’

Here, Sara reveals how her training schedule has ‘taken over her life’, and the famous faces giving her advice…

> ‘There’ll be ugly crying’

You turned 50 last December – did the milestone spur you to take on the challenge?

I can’t lie and say it was always my dream. I had no choice. My boss was all aglow with excitement, because she had the brilliant idea of completing the Bolton triangle after Vernon [Kay] and Paddy [McGuinness] undertook different CiN challenges over the last few years. I’m quite happy to represent the women. It’s going to hurt – there’ll be some ugly crying on telly, and swear words they’ll have to beep out. But when I’m 102 and in the Home for Confused DJs, I’ll probably look back on it as the most incredible thing. It’s completely taken over my life.



Training has taken over her life

How does your training schedule differ now?

Before this, I was going to the gym a couple of times a week, occasionally cycling into work when the weather was right, walking the dogs and riding my horse. I’ve never been a sedentary person, but I’ve never been a runner. I’d never even done a 10k before this, because my knee always feels a bit funny at five miles. I have to run until it hurts, and then walk for a bit. It’d be insane to try and run the whole thing, I’m not Mo Farah! I ran 10 miles today. That’s not normal for a human. I don’t even go that far on my horse!

How are you feeling about the challenge?

The best analogy is when you’re excited to be pregnant, but faintly terrified. You can’t change your mind. Every pregnant woman thinks, ‘Oh my God, I’ve got to get this baby out of me.’ I just have to have faith in the experts and not listen to the voices in my head.

Exclusive

'll have to beep y swearing!'

n in Need challenge, Sara Cox tells star giving her advice, and exactly DJ has on her training playlist…

Meeting Dwayne 'The Rock' Johnson

Do you have a plan of action?
I've just got to get through five or six miles at a time – because then I stop, and they'll give me some chocolate. I've also requested pork pies and sausage rolls. I might get a pork pie sponsor. I could be the face of Melton Mowbray!

Have Paddy and Vernon given you any advice?
Vernon mainly tells me to go and run up some hills, so I've been hill training with the dogs. And Paddy's just like, 'Look, ignore all the noise around it and just get your head down and do your training.'

> 'You have to keep going'

Has anyone else given you any tips?
Zoe [Ball] sent me a lovely text. She did a really hardcore cycling challenge a few years back. She told me I'm from 'strong stock', which I like, because it's farming terminology and my dad's a farmer! Jeremy [Vine] is one of my best mates at Radio 2, so I'll focus on going out for a margarita, some dinner and a debrief or gossip with him afterwards. I interviewed The Rock [Dwayne Johnson] on BBC Radio 2 and tried to tempt him up to Leeds, but he insisted he's very busy! He seemed pretty impressed, so that will keep me going. I think his advice was along the lines of, 'You just have to keep going, because how will you feel if you don't finish it?' I'm like, 'Okay, Rock… I kind of know that already.'

Maybe he was more concerned about the rain...
Coming down the northeast along the coast is pretty wild – we could easily have sideways sleet. It'll be like a facial, won't it? I'll look 25 by the time I cross the finish line, after I've had three layers of skin battered off my face with the northern weather. I'll be all glowy. Don't spend money on expensive treatments – just go running in gale-force winds!

What songs are on your training playlists?
Chase and Status's *Baddadan* is an incredible song to run to. When I'm cooling down, and I'm euphoric and buzzing a bit, I love something a bit different like Olivia Rodrigo's *Obsessed*. I really love Blur and *The Narcissist* from their last album – brilliant lyrics and it's got that Elbow, *One Day Like This* vibe. I've also been listening a lot to Radio 2. Maybe I need to get more drum and bass on Jeremy's show!

● *Listen to BBC Radio 2 from 10–14 November as Sara Cox takes on the 'Great Northern Marathon Challenge' for BBC Children in Need*

Pal Zoe Ball has been supportive

Sara is close friends with Jeremy Vine

By Sophie Cockerham, **Pictures** BBC, Instagram/BBC Radio 2, Instagram/Sara Cox, Dave Benett/Getty Images

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A woman online has admitted feeling 'upset' after a friend started tidying her home without asking. *So, we ask…*

Is it rude to do chores in someone else's house?

No

'It fills me with joy'

Sonja Morgenstern, 48, casting director

I'm not passing judgement on someone's home if I grab a spray or cloth, instead it's an attempt to put a bit of a spark into their day.

Nobody loves doing chores, but it fills me with joy to be able to help. After becoming a parent, cleaning for others is one of my love languages.

When my son was small, we spent a weekend at a friend's house. She and her husband both worked from home, and one of their children is disabled. Their toilet was in such a state, I concluded that they, understandably, simply didn't have time to clean.

So I got to work until the loo regained its sparkle and it had a welcoming fragrance. I didn't want to embarrass them by mentioning it but liked to imagine the couple's relief when they realised this bothersome chore had been taken care of – hopefully suspecting their spouse of being the cleaning fairy! My aim wasn't to make them feel inadequate, but to help. I sometimes stay with another friend in the summer and like to support her by cleaning. Raising four children as a single parent, her priorities are getting everyone fed and earning money, not having the perfect house. I have the time to clean, and she was genuinely thankful when I tackled her blocked dishwasher filter.

It is important to be respectful, but everyone is more comfortable when they have shiny surfaces, a clear sink and a clean loo.

Yes

'I'd feel judged and ashamed'

Sarah Veness, 49, publisher

Don't get me wrong, I'd love to have help with the housework. But from someone who lives in my home or a paid cleaner – not from a guest.

If a visitor plugged in the vacuum, started dusting or clearing out the fridge, I would be mortified. I'd feel judged that my house wasn't seen as being up to scratch.

A few months ago, a friend popped in for coffee. As we were chatting, I had to answer a work call and when I came back, she'd washed up the breakfast dishes and was wiping the kitchen worktops. I was embarrassed and while I know she was trying to do a nice thing, it left me feeling like she thought my house was a mess.

I think guests should clean up after themselves but nothing more. It's one thing washing up the mug you drank out of, but quite another fully loading someone's dishwasher.

In some cases, helping with chores could create more work. I remember a relative unloading our dishwasher and putting away everything in random places. It took us ages to locate the cheese grater!

It comes across as rude, which I imagine is the last thing that these generous chore-doers would want!

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By Amber Connolly, **Pictures** Getty Images

'My darling son died...then he SAVED 9 LIVES'

After suffering a double tragedy, Lisa Wilson, 62, turned her pain into a hope for others

Tom

Reaching across the table for a helping of Chinese takeaway, I soaked up the happy chatter of my family. It was an unexpected pleasure as my husband Graham and I were empty nesters. Our son Tom, 22, was living in London, studying for a postgraduate qualification alongside working as a property surveyor, while our daughter Pippa, 21, was at university in Birmingham. But that weekend, three weeks before Christmas 2015, both of them were back home in Essex.

'I'm not going to play hockey on Tuesday. I'll go to training but my shin's feeling a bit sore,' Tom said. Hockey was a huge part of our family. It was how Graham and I had met 30 years earlier when I had a trial for a local club where he was the first team captain. Both sports mad, we'd played the sport for years and brought the children up playing it too. I became a PE teacher and Graham worked on the sports desk of a national newspaper. Unsurprisingly, both children were sports captains at school and we'd spend our spare time watching hockey matches in between training and playing.

On 8 December 2015, at around 9pm, Tom's best friend, Rob, called. 'Tom's been hurt at training,' he said. 'But Tom's not training tonight,' I replied, remembering our conversation a few days before. Then I heard someone in the background of the call saying, 'Is he still breathing?' My heart started to beat faster in panic. 'You need to come now,' Rob said. 'It's serious.' I hung up and phoned Graham and together we drove to the Old Loughtonians Hockey Club in Chigwell.

'Tom's been hurt'

When we arrived, there was an ambulance, police cars and a helicopter on the pitch. Jumping out of the car, I ran to Tom who was lying on his back, surrounded by paramedics. 'He's cold,' I said, feeling his icy skin. Though the paramedics put another silver blanket over him, I knew in that instant that my boy was gone.

As Tom was taken to the Royal London Whitechapel Hospital, we discovered that he had decided to play that night after all, and he had been hit on the back of the head by a hockey stick in a freak accident. At the hospital, Graham and I were met by a consultant. 'I'm so sorry but there's nothing more we can do for Tom,' he explained. 'He's suffered a massive brain haemorrhage.' The next morning, doctors would run tests to confirm what they already knew – that Tom was brain dead. We were led to the high dependency unit where Tom lay in room 10. He'd played as number 10 in his hockey team.

Sitting by his side all night long, we tried to wrap our heads around the impossible. Tom was so fit and healthy. How could he be gone at just 22? How could we say goodbye

Lisa meeting Lubna and Fatima for the first time

With Fatima and Gordon, holding Tom's Baton

Graham, Lisa, Tom and Pippa

when his chest was still rising and falling? 'There's nothing more anyone can do for Tom now, but he can do something for others,' Graham said in the early hours of the following morning. Graham, like our son, was always thinking of others. Pippa arrived at 7am from Birmingham and together we spoke to the organ donor nurse who informed us that Tom had registered to be an organ donor when he was 18, whilst at university. I wanted to wake him up and tell him I was so, so proud of him but instead, we had to say our goodbyes.

In organ donation terms, Tom was gold dust. He was in his early 20s and extremely fit and healthy, and his organs had been kept in perfect condition because he was on a ventilator. We agreed to donate everything, from his organs to his skin, tendons and some bone. Although heartbroken, it gave us comfort knowing Tom would be helping so many people. In all, Tom's tissues and organs helped save nine lives and improved the lives of 41 others.

But, as we grappled with his loss, we received more devastating news. Less than two months after Tom's death, Graham was diagnosed with a brain tumour and contracted sepsis in his first week of chemotherapy. 'You have to keep Tom's legacy alive,' he said, just hours before passing away in February 2016, aged 63. In less than two months, Pippa had lost her dad and her beloved brother, and I'd lost a husband and a son.

'I heard his heart beating'

Through it all though, Tom's organ donation gave us hope. Within weeks of Graham's death, I wrote letters to the recipients via the transplant coordinator. And I received a reply from a mother called Lubna. She explained that part of Tom's liver had saved her daughter Fatima's life. It was a light in the darkness. In 2018, I met Lubna and Fatima. Arriving at the park, I spotted a little girl running towards me with a bunch of flowers in her hand. This five-year-old girl was alive because of my Tom. Lubna and I talked for hours, and I told them both all about him. 'Promise me that you'll stay fit and healthy,' I said to Fatima. 'That's all Tom would have wanted.'

Soon after, I received another letter from a man named Gordon who'd received Tom's heart. We met at the West Ham football stadium a year on, in 2019. He'd brought along a stethoscope and in that huge and empty stadium, I heard my son's heart beating. 'Tom gave me a second chance,' Gordon said. I told him the same thing I'd said to Fatima, and he nodded. 'Promise me that you'll stay fit and healthy,' I repeated. 'I will,' he said. 'I'm going to start playing table tennis again.' We reunited at the 2022 Transplant Games in Leeds. Fatima, Gordon and I opened the event on stage by handing over Tom's Baton, a symbol of donor and recipient.

Now, I have left teaching and established The Tom Wilson Memorial Fund to promote organ donation. Fatima is 12 and she recently won her first medal in the British Transplant Games in swimming and I had the honour of presenting her with her medal.

Gordon is 70 and was selected to represent team GB in table tennis at the World Transplant Games in Germany back in August. These two amazing people are making the most of their second chance at life, all thanks to our amazing Tom. In December it will be 10 years since we lost him but there isn't a day goes by when I don't think about him.

I'll never get over losing him or Graham, but when I hear Tom's heartbeat in Gordon or hug Fatima and know that part of his liver is inside her and keeping her alive, it brings me great comfort. Tom gave them the most precious gift of all, the gift of life, and I am so proud of him.

● *For more information, visit tomwilsonmemorialfund.co.uk*

By Miyo Padi and Matt Barbour, **Pictures** Richard Hall

'Breathless walking up the stairs – now I'm 5st lighter and a lot fitter!'

When Kura Burrell, 30, saw pictures from her birthday, they inspired a change

BEFORE
18st 1.5lb
Size 20

Still on a high from my 30th birthday party the night before, I scrolled through my phone to look at all the photos. As I swiped from one picture to the next though, my happy smile soon vanished. 'Why didn't anyone tell me I'd put on so much weight?' I asked my partner, Matt. Then, before he even had a chance to answer, I added, 'I have got to do something about it.' And, for the first time in my life, I actually meant it.

As a teenager, I was slim and didn't think twice about what I ate. But after I finished school, I had a new boyfriend, who worked for a fast-food chain, and most lunchtimes he'd bring me a double cheeseburger with fries and a milkshake. On top of that, we often ordered Chinese and Indian takeaways, and gradually the numbers on the scales started to go up.

By the time I was 20, I was a size 16 and working on the tills at a DIY store, where I'd buy a bacon and mayonnaise bap from the nearby food van for breakfast, and a jacket potato with creamy curry for lunch. After my boyfriend and I split up, I embarked on one fad diet after another. Each time, I'd manage to lose about a stone, before getting fed up with feeling hungry and deprived, and going back to my old habits.

Then in 2019 I met Matt. He'd lost 5st with Slimming World and although he was no longer a member, he still cooked the Slimming World way at home. While I loved the meals he made for me, I didn't really listen when he tried to explain more about the plan. I'd kid myself I was being healthy by ordering a salad with my kebab, or drinking water with my sausage, chips and curry sauce.

By now, I was working as a prison officer, and my size was taking its toll. I'd get breathless going up and down the stairs, and when one day I tripped and fell over, I found I couldn't get up. Unable to catch my breath, I just sat there until the wheezing

Kura rarely exercised

She now does 10,000 steps a day

AFTER
13st 5lb
Size 12

Now she feels great

stopped. After that, I always took the lift.

Then in November 2024 came my big milestone birthday. I'd been so excited, booking a party venue, inviting all our friends and hiring a 360-degree photo booth. But now, as I looked through the pictures, I just felt so disappointed. 'Do you think I could try Slimming World?' I asked Matt. He smiled and said, 'Go for it!'

I was terrified as I drove myself to the group near to me in the West Midlands. The Consultant, Emma, had sounded so lovely and friendly on the phone a couple of days before, but I couldn't help worrying about being judged for my size. After parking up outside, I sent Matt a text. 'What do I do?' it read. 'Just walk into the hall, and then the rest will be taken care of,' came the reply. I knew that if I turned back now, it was unlikely I'd ever take control of my weight so, taking a deep breath, I got out of the car and walked nervously inside, where I was greeted by a host of friendly faces. It was a shock when I weighed in privately at the end of the session to see 18st 1½lb pop up on the scales. But it also galvanised me. Emma had explained just how simple Slimming World's healthy eating plan, Food Optimising, was to follow.

Back at home, I took out my Slimming World member book and planned out the new healthy meals I was going to have, knowing that if I was going to stick to the plan, I needed to be prepared. At breakfast, I swapped bacon baps for fat-free natural yogurt with berries and sliced banana, or grilled bacon medallions with two eggs, mushrooms and tomatoes fried in low-calorie cooking spray, baked beans and wholemeal toast. I batch cooked portions of skinless chicken breast with rice, broccoli and sweetcorn to take to work for lunch, and filled up on jacket potatoes at the end of a long shift, either with tuna mixed with extra light mayo or beans and cheese, with a big salad.

After just two weeks, I'd lost half a stone, and I was thrilled. Not only had I managed to stick to the plan, I hadn't felt hungry once, or craved the takeaways I'd lived on for so long. I asked Matt to show me some of his favourite Slimming World recipes, and soon we were taking it in turns to cook sweet chilli salmon with rice and veg, or hunter's chicken from the Slimming World members' site. I'd never enjoyed so many delicious, balanced meals.

As my energy levels increased, I felt ready to introduce some activity into my routine. Matt and I started going for walks together. Every other weekend we'd head out for the day and do up to 10 miles. I made it my mission to walk at least 10,000 steps a day, and at work I stopped getting the lifts and easily ran up and down the stairs instead. Week after week, I continued losing weight. At work, I swapped my size-20 uniform for a size-16 shirt and size-14 trousers.

When we booked a holiday to the Dominican Republic this June, I went on a shopping spree, returning with fitted shorts, crop tops and several pretty summer dresses. When we arrived at the resort, I changed straight away for the pool. 'I'm in a bikini!' I said to Matt. 'I'm actually in a bikini!'

The following night after dinner, Matt suggested a walk along the beach. As we watched the sun slipping down below the horizon, he turned me to face him and dropped down onto one knee. 'Will you marry me?' he asked. He didn't have to ask twice!

I'm getting closer to my 12st 7lb target weight now which I am so proud of. We haven't set a date for the wedding yet, but when the time comes, I'm looking forward to wearing the dress of my dreams. I really like the new me – and I'm not going to let that change!

DIET BEFORE

BREAKFAST Bacon sandwich
LUNCH Burger or jacket potato and curry
DINNER Kebab or sausage and chips
SNACKS Biscuits and crisps

DIET AFTER

BREAKFAST Natural yogurt with berries and sliced banana, or grilled bacon medallions with eggs, mushrooms and tomatoes fried in low-calorie cooking spray, baked beans and wholemeal toast
LUNCH Skinless chicken breast with rice, broccoli and sweetcorn
DINNER Tuna jacket potato with salad or sweet chilli salmon with rice and veg
SNACKS Fruit

By Amy Rowland and Michelle Rawlins, **Pictures** Paul Buller, Slimming World

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Spoil your loved ones with gifts to suit every budget

Reindeer top and skirt, JoJo Maman Bébé, £34

All new Velvetiser, Hotel Chocolat, from £109.95

JellyCat Toastie Marshmallows, Selfridges, £33

Eau de Parfum and Shower Gel Cracker, Molton Brown, £22

Lego Gameboy, lego.com, £54.99

Micro Cruiser, micro-scooters.co.uk, £139.95

Limited Edition Disaronno Anniversary Edition, Tesco, £18.25

Jingles Reindeer Toy, £35; **Reinder Book,** £8.50; **Jingles Sack,** £34 all The White Company

LOL Surprise Magic Flyers, Hamleys, £30

Day and Night Iconic Duo, Elemis, £145

CHRISTMAS GIFT GUIDE

For Her

Hollywood Instant Look Palette, Charlotte Tilbury, **£58**

Green sequin bag, M&S, **£26**

Leather gloves, Next, **£26**

Striped pyjamas, M&S, **£35**

Angie Stone bow earrings, Oliver Bonas, **£14.50**

Check scarf, Matalan, **£11**

Cath Kidston pink bow mug, Lakeland, **£9.99**

Bow slippers, New Look, **£12.99**

Mini Lip Gloss Trio, Bobbi Brown, **£35**

Baylis and Harding Luxury Hand Wash, Boots, **£15**

Pink blush watch, Next, **£36**

By Carly Honeyfield

Sanctuary Spa Signature Regime Set, Boots, £8.50

Paperclip Link Bracelet, Accessorize, £34

Clementine Oil Diffuser, Neom, £109

Carolina Herrera Good Girl Bowtastic Eau de Parfum, The Fragrance Shop, £105

Finest Champagne Chocolates, Tesco, £5

Best of Ole Skincare, Sephora, £41

Sequin jacket, M&S, £55

This Works Dream to Sleep set, John Lewis, £30

Diary, Next, £6

Horoscope keyring, eleanorbowmer.co.uk, £9

Airshot Pro Hairdryer, cloudninehair.com, £349

Jo by Jo Loves gift set, £40

Gold boots, Tu at Sainsbury's, £28

CHRISTMAS GIFT GUIDE

For Him

GAZELLE
adidas

THE WINE GAME

The Wine Game, Talking Tables, **£28**

BEER SELECTION
BECK'S
Carlsberg PILSNER
COURAGE LIGHT ALE
HOLSTEN pils

Beer selection, B&M, **£5**

Suede Chelsea boots, John Lewis, **£99**

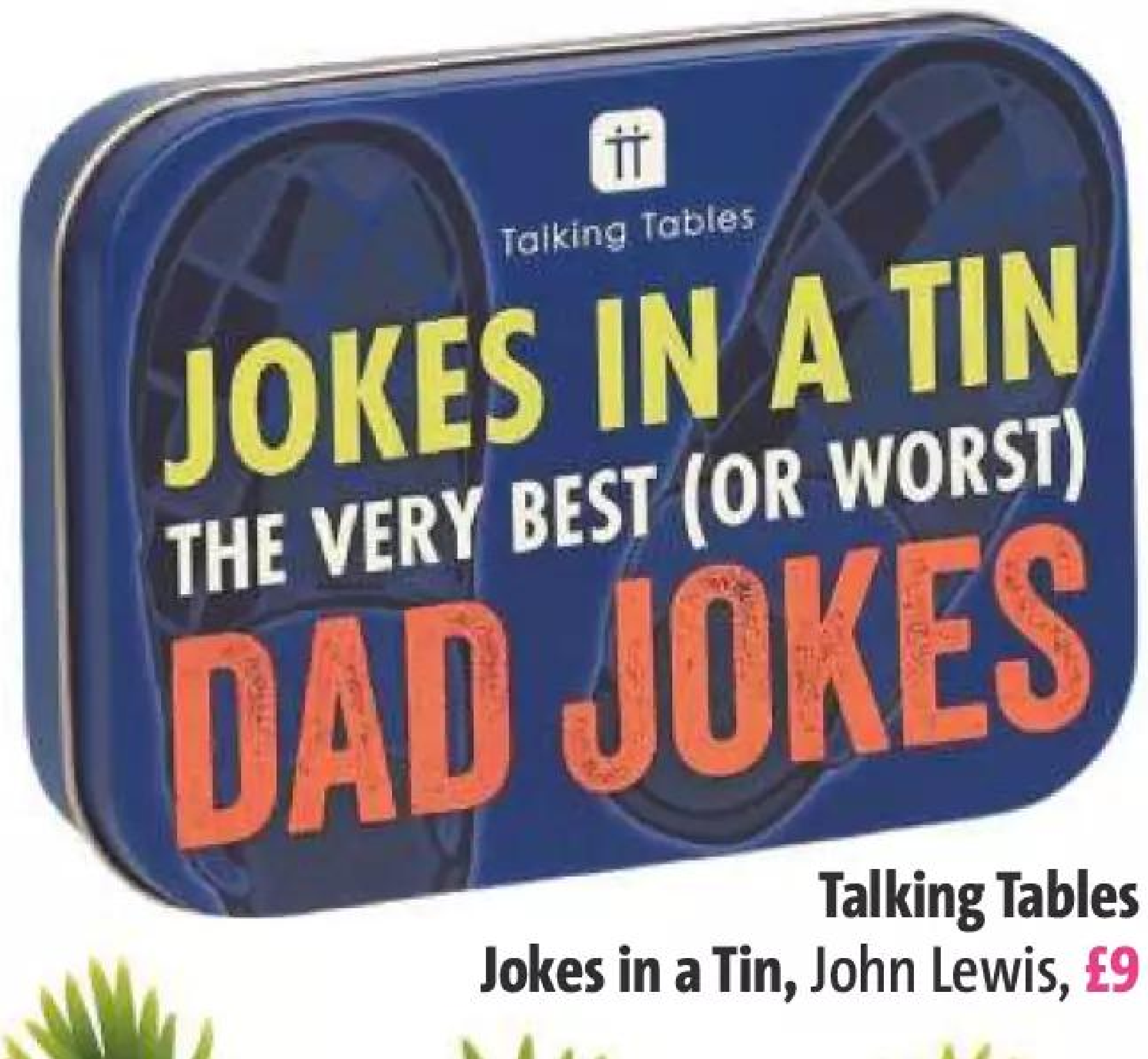
Checked dressing gown, M&S, **£49**

Stripe scarf, Joe Browns, **£20**

PRADA
MILANO

Prada Paradigme Eau de Parfum, John Lewis, **£72.25**

Taste the Difference Mini Chocolate Chip Shortbread, Sainsbury's, **£8**


Talking Tables
JOKES IN A TIN
THE VERY BEST (OR WORST)
DAD JOKES

Talking Tables Jokes in a Tin, John Lewis, **£9**

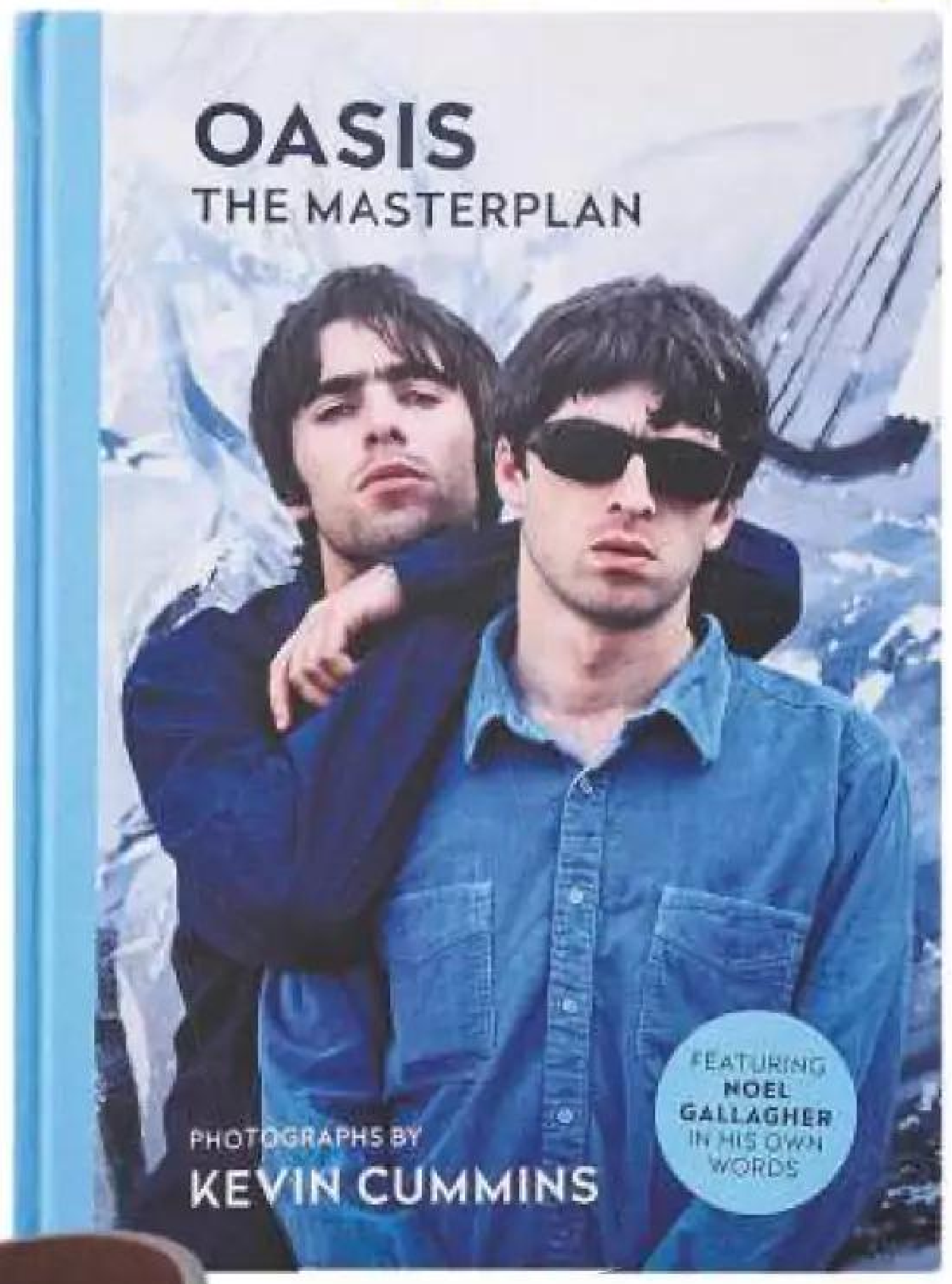
ORACLE
Red Bull
Mobil

Oracle Red Bull Racing Car, Lego, **£199.99**

By Carly Honeyfield

Adidas Gazelle, Office, **£94.99**

Gingerbread socks, happysocks.com, **£12**

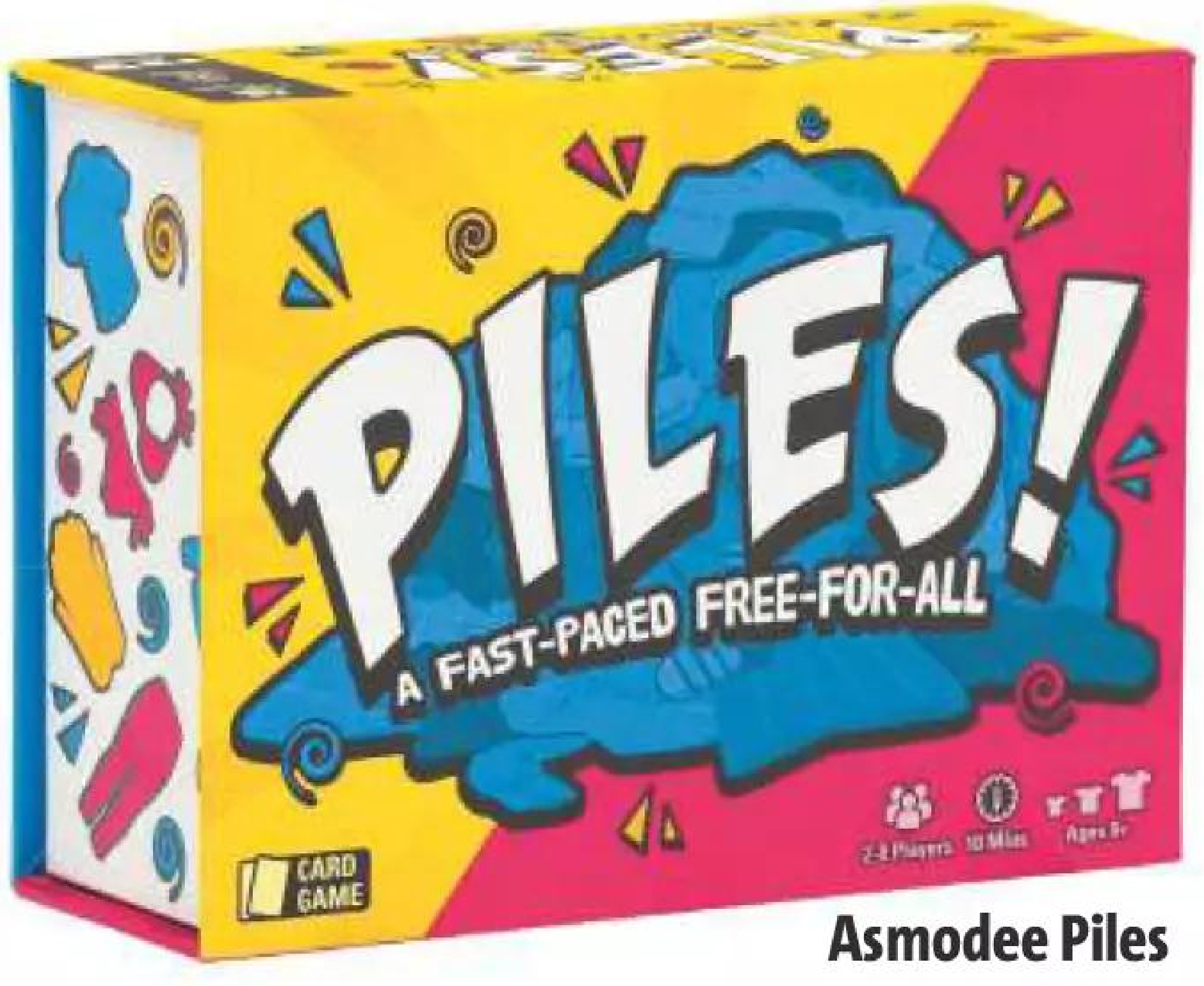


Oasis The Masterplan Book, Urban Outfitters, **£35**

Yellowstone Chilli Sauces, Robert Dyas, **£9.99**

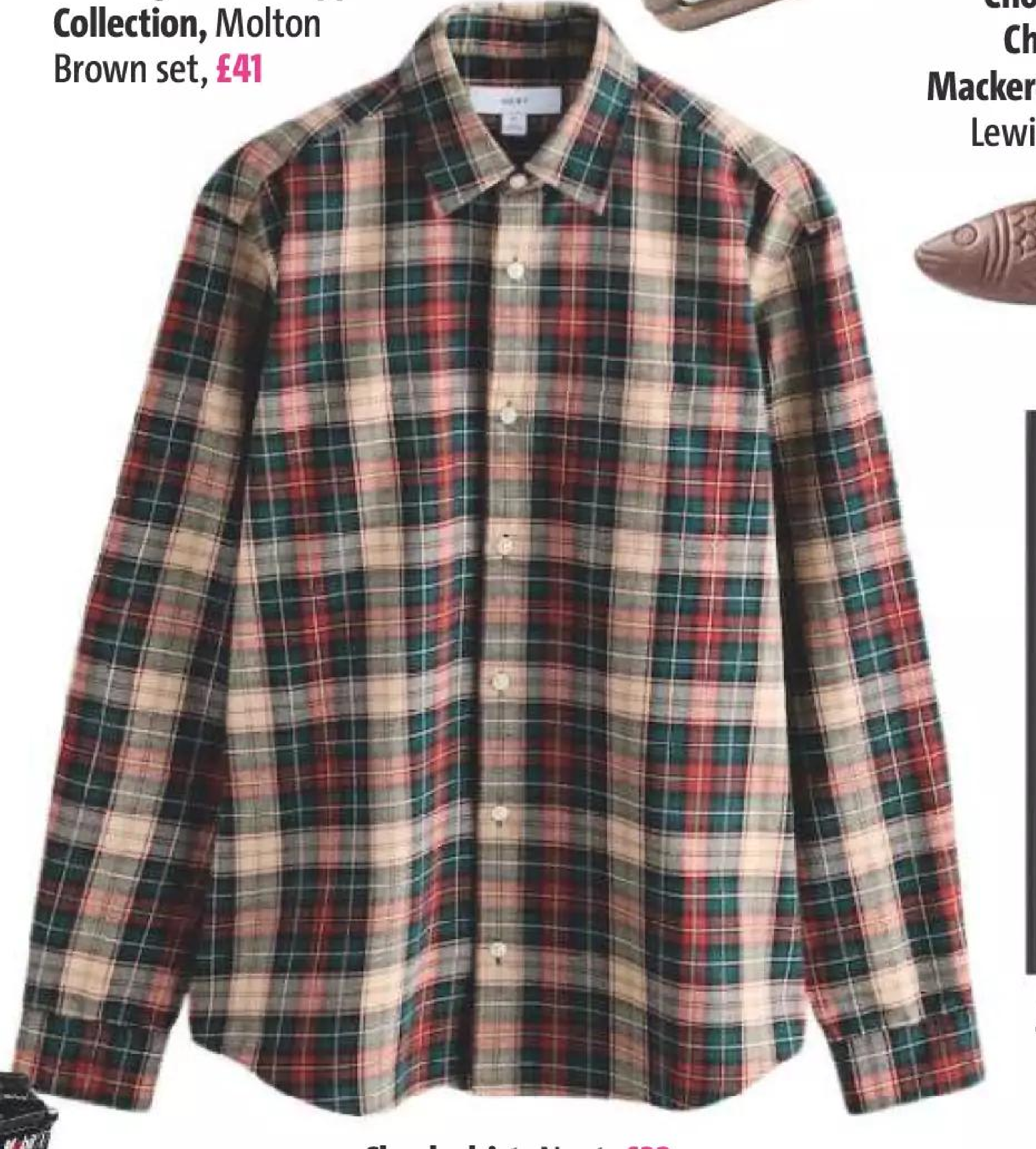
Recharge Black Pepper Collection, Molton Brown set, **£41**

Barbour brown belt, John Lewis, **£30**



Asmodee Piles party game, John Lewis, **£19.99**

Choco Dark Chocolate Mackerel, John Lewis, **£9.94**



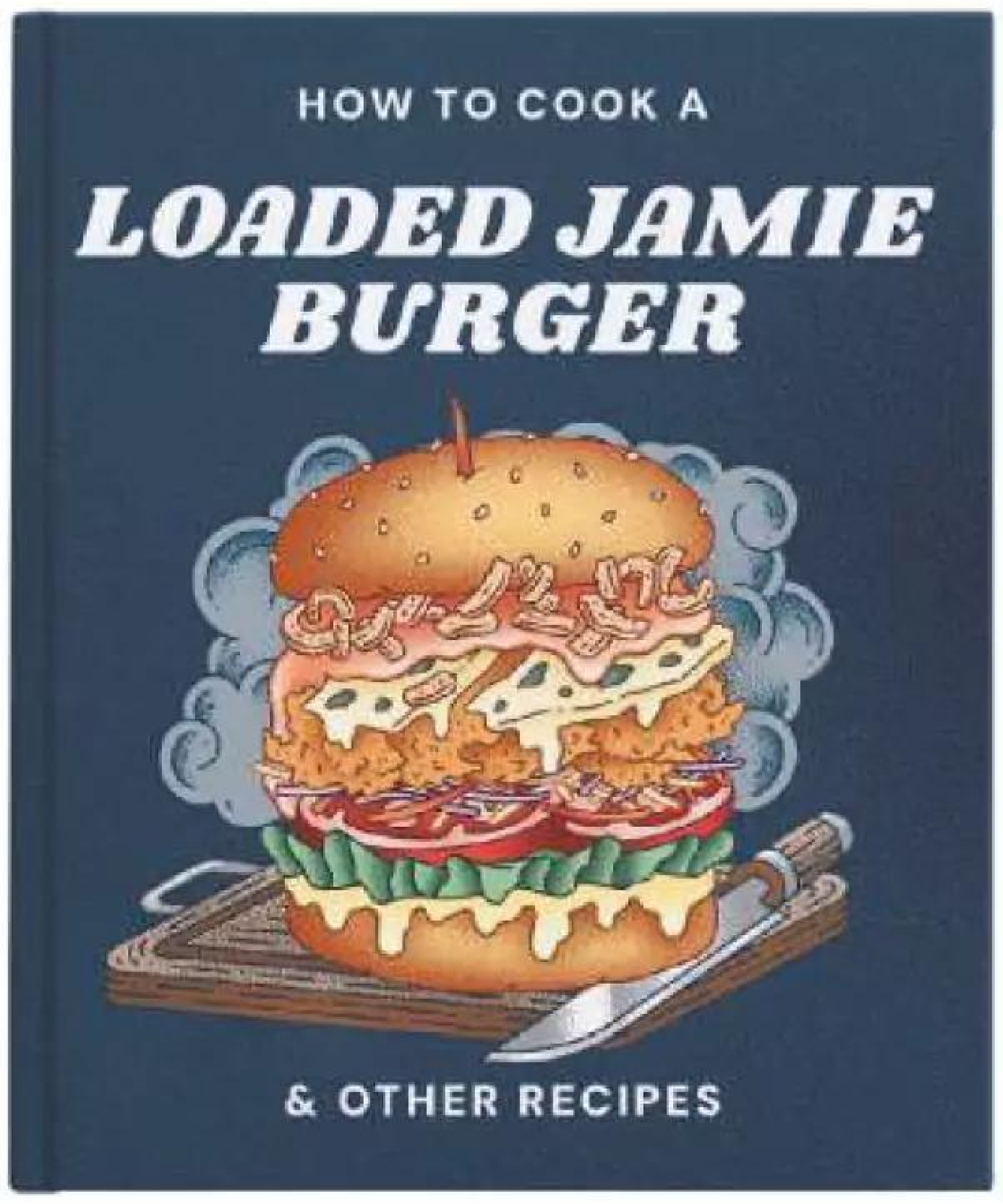
Check shirt, Next, **£32**

Paul Smith Grooming Kit, Boots, **£16**

Jack Daniels Family of Brands, Sainsbury's, **£14.25**

Navy slippers, Next, **£20**

Deep Tissue Percussive Massage Gun, Boots, **£49.99**



Personalised How to Cook a Burger Book, Wonderbly, from **£29.99**

CHRISTMAS GIFT GUIDE

For Kids

Peppa Pig's Big Family House, The Entertainer, £40

Uno Spin, Smyths, £15

Football slippers, Next, £12

Bluey Bubble Bath, Sainsbury's, £8

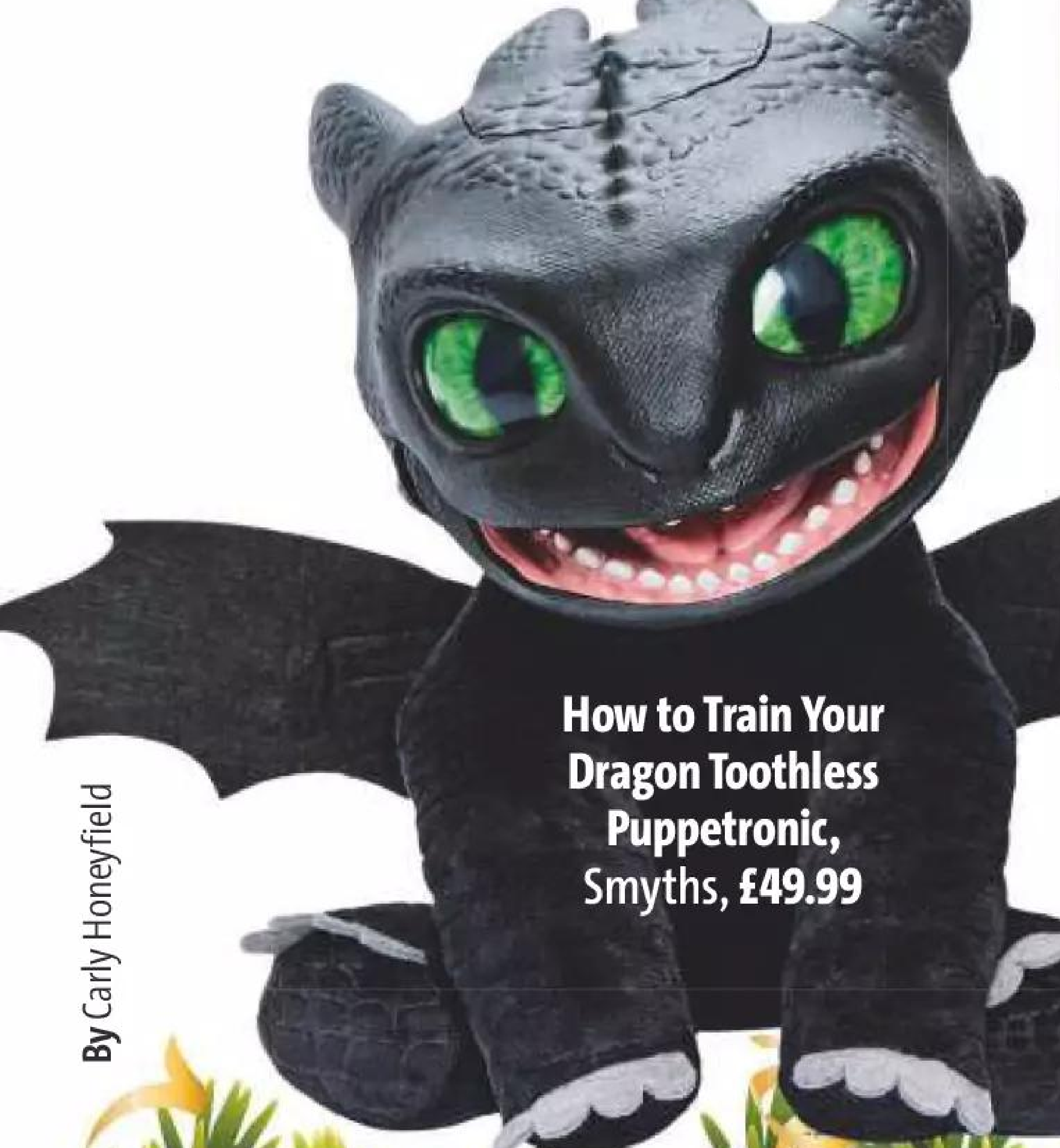
Sequin dress, M&S, £28

Pets Alive Polly, The Entertainer, £29.99

Strikesphere Soccer Launcher, Smyths, £129.99

Ballerina Snow Globe, Lakeland, £9.95

Swizzles Love Hearts Plushies, B&M, £12.99

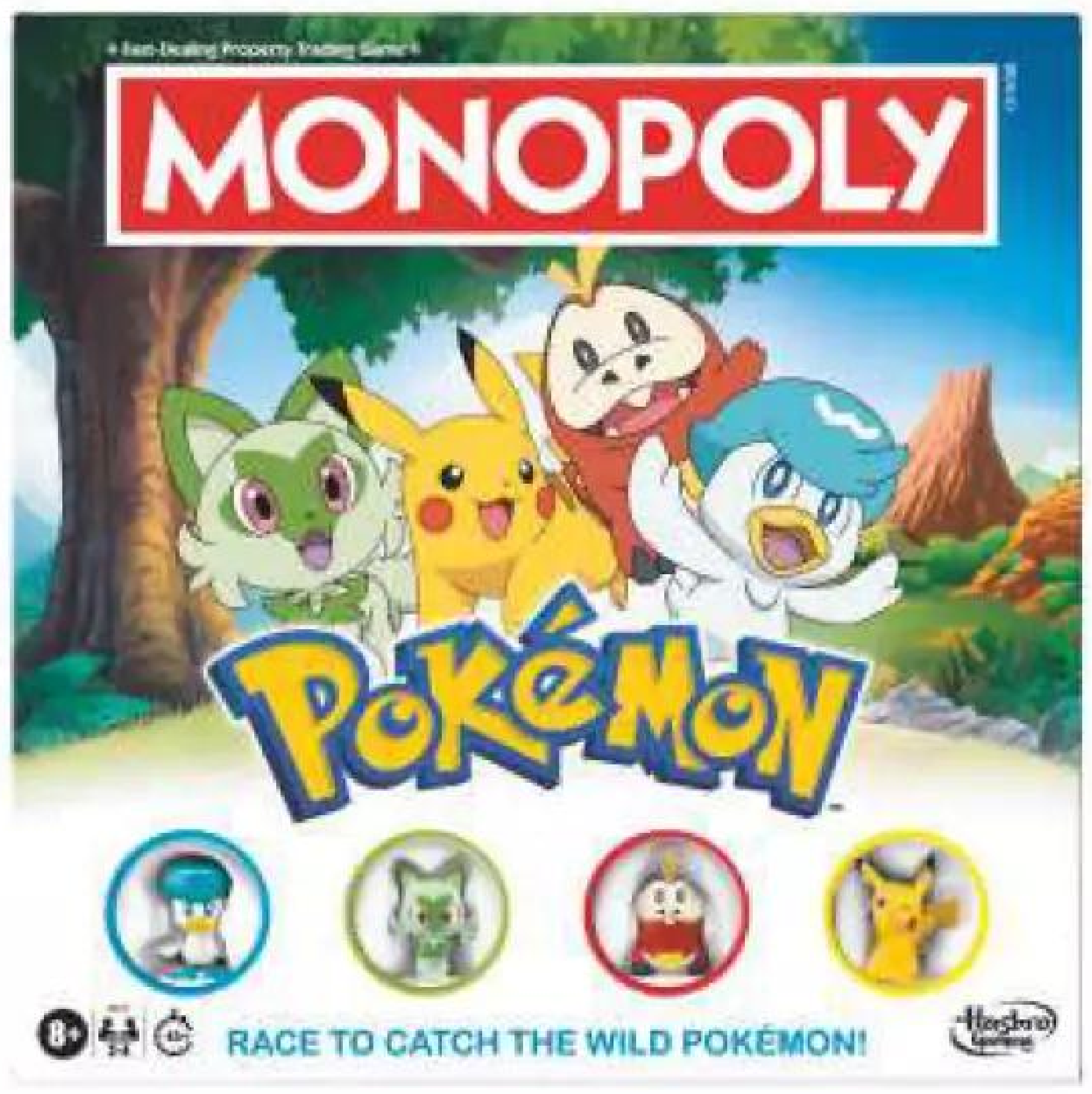

How to Train Your Dragon Toothless Puppetronic, Smyths, £49.99

Team Sonic Command Truck, Lego, £59.99

By Carly Honeyfield

VTech Magical Makeover Fairy Fox, Argos, **£50**

Toniebox 2, tonies.com, from **£94.99**

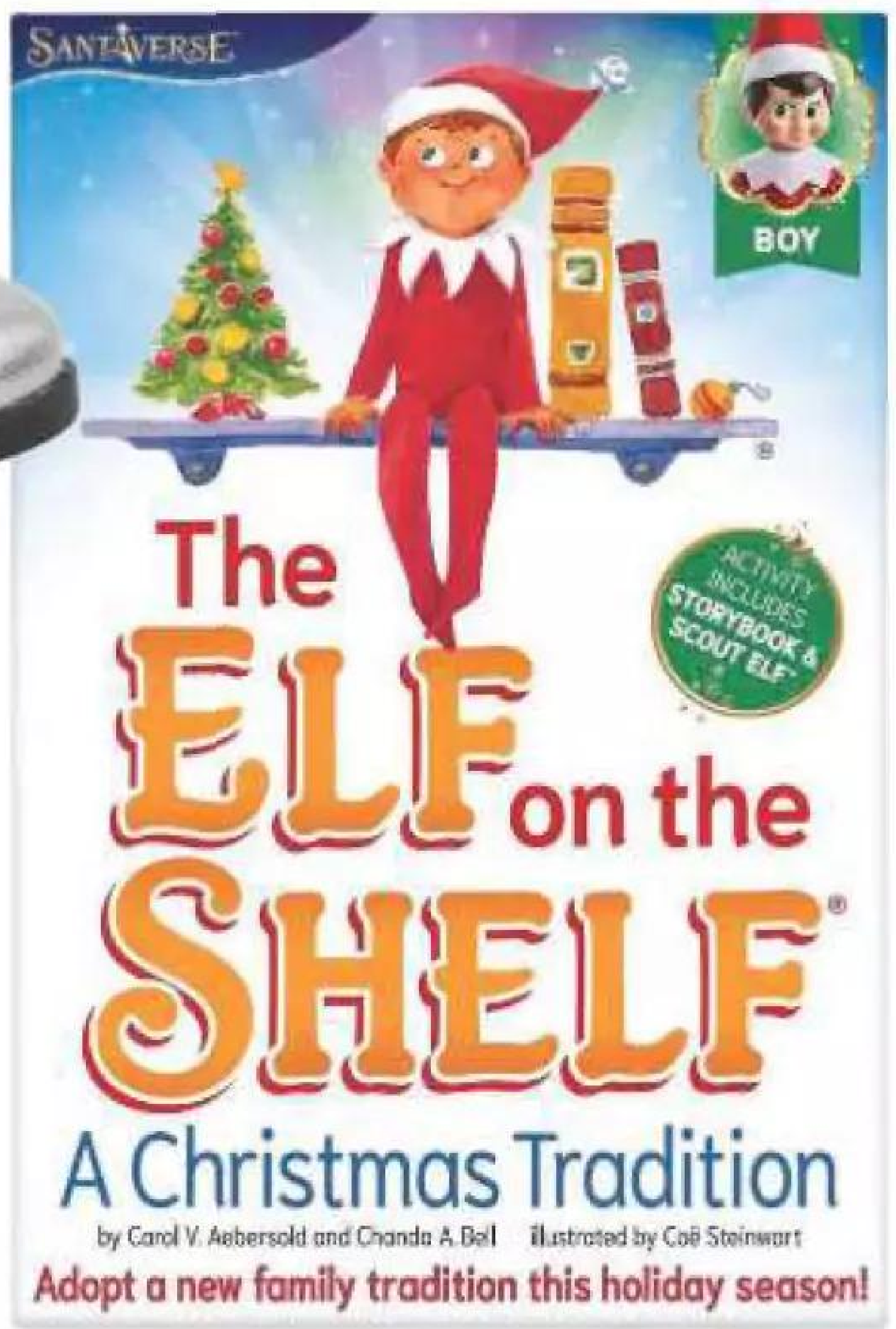


Pokemon Monopoly, Argos, **£18**

Belle Singing Tea Cart Play, Disney Store, **£45**

Hot Wheels Racing Formula 1 Grand Prix Circuit, Very, **£69.99**

Western boots, M&S, **£30**



The Original Elf on the Shelf Box Set, Argos, **£20**

Play Doh Cake Playset, Argos, **£28.50**

Wooden Tool Bench, Argos, **£35**

Vtech Disney Stitch Secret Safe Diary, Amazon, **£24.99**

Fortnite Paladone Burger Mug, Boots, **£12.50**

Hot Wheels Ultimate Dual Dragon Transporter, The Entertainer, **£39**

CHRISTMAS GIFT GUIDE

For Teens

XBox Push My Button Soap, Boots, £7.50

Bow Satin Pyjamas, River Island, £26

Merry Matchbox Earrings Set, matchbox jewellery.com, £40

Reto Ultra-Wide Film Camera, Amazon, £29.99

Snow Fairy Set, Lush, £28

Free Sip Sway, Owala, £36.99

Jr Mercurial Vapor 16 Academy football Boot, Nike, £59.99

Fat Face Born To Roam Body Spray Trio, Boots, £14.50

Huffy Extent Junior Mountain Bike, Halfords, £225

Sausage dog slippers, New Look, £17.99

By Carly Honeyfield

Crosley Discovery Portable Turntable, Amazon, **£87.97**

Lucky Number Necklace, lauragravestock.com, **£95**

Tabletop Padel, Boots, **£7.50**

Mini Karaoke Set, Menkind, **£20**

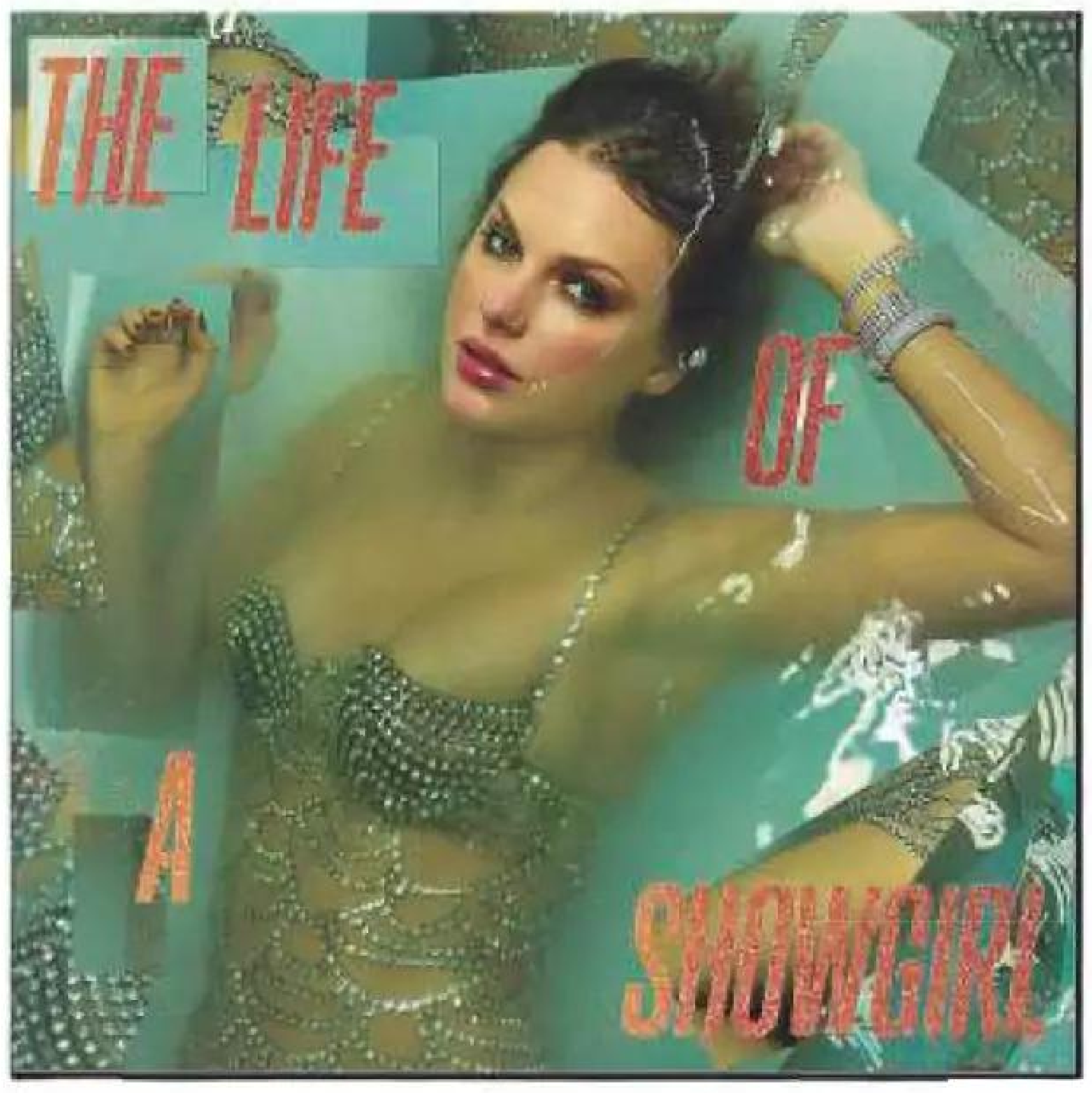
Byoma Milky Way Hydrating Heroes, Boots, **£15**

Marc Jacobs Perfect, The Fragrance Shop, **£68**

Makeup Wash Bag, Katie Loxton, from **£29.99**

3D Football, sportsdirect.com, **£20**

Hugo Superman, The Fragrance Shop, **£64.80**


Taylor Swift Life Of A Showgirl Vinyl, Urban Outfitters, **£40**

FC 26 PS5 Game, Amazon, **£62.95**

Game Joy Make Up Set, Benefit, **£34.50**

White Fox Beauty Bag, Boots, **£25**

CHRISTMAS GIFT GUIDE

Food & Home

After Eight Design Edition, John Lewis, **£5**

Confetti cocktail glass, Sainsbury's **£5**

Festive Favourites Hamper, Lakeland, **£59.99**

Classic Mince Pies, Bettys, **£19.95** for 12

Snowman tumblers, Next, **£18** for four

Caramel Crunch tin, M&S, **£10**

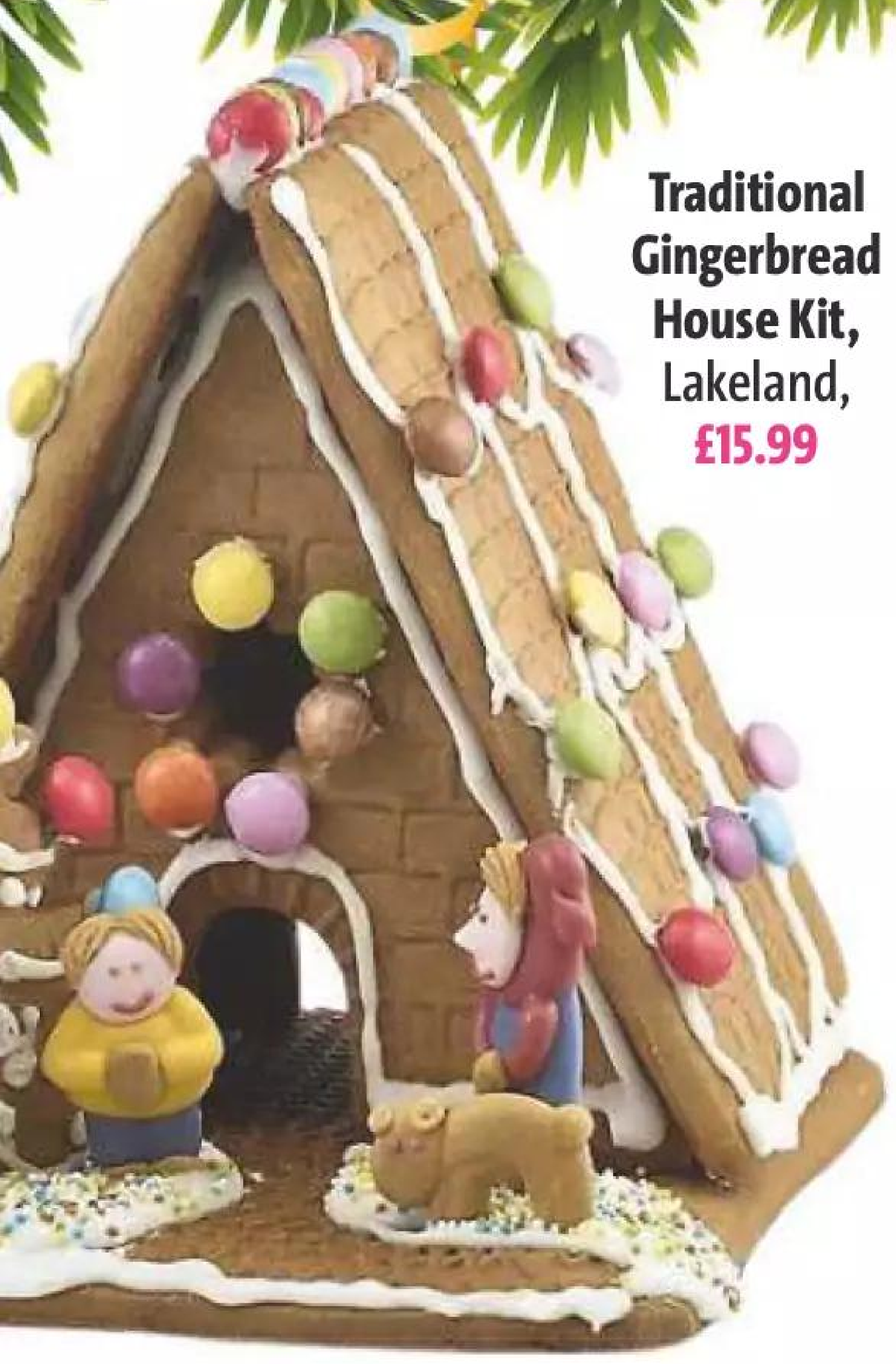
The Marksologist Seville Orange Gin Cocktail, M&S, **£20**

Rose and berry wreath, Habitat, **£35**

Pigs in Blankets Mug, Eleanor Bowmer, **£14**

Christmas Pudding Salt & Pepper Shakers, The Range, **£4.99**

By Carly Honeyfield



Traditional Gingerbread House Kit, Lakeland, **£15.99**

ITALIAN CHOCOLATE & CHERRY PANETTONE

Chocolate and Cherry Panettone, M&S, **£20**

TOFFEE FLAVOURED VODKA LIQUEUR

Infusionist Toffee Flavoured Vodka Liqueur, Aldi, **£13.99**

Christmas Time
Mistletoe & Wine

Personalised dinner plate, Emma Bridgewater, from **£26**

SLEIGH ALL DAY

Sleigh cushion, Next, **£25**

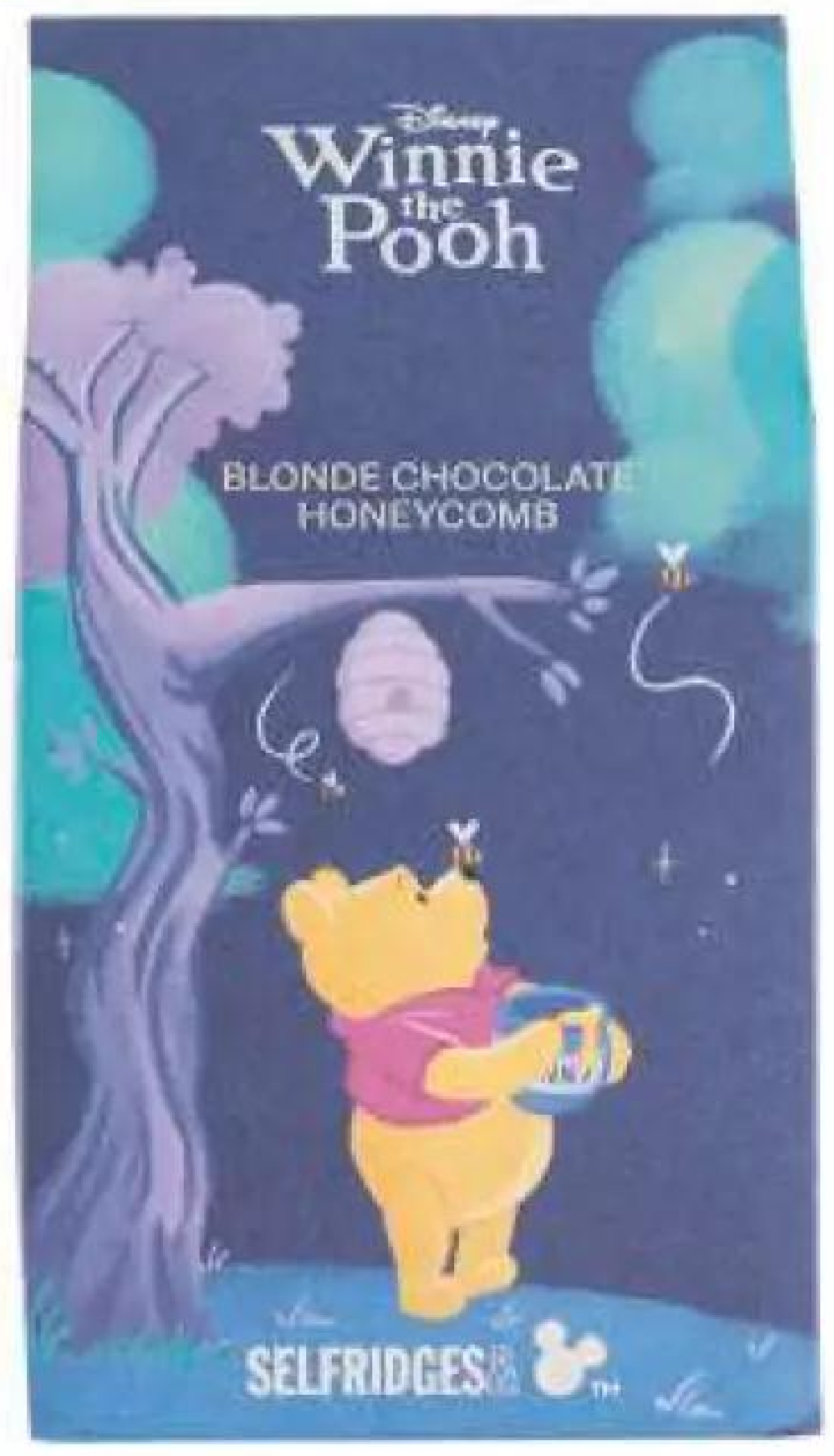
McVitie's
Chocolate Digestives
100 YEARS

McVitie's Chocolate Digestives Anniversary Tin, Sainsbury's, **£6**

CARTWRIGHT ENGLAND & BUTLER

Sea Salted Caramel Biscuits, Cartwright & Butler, **£12.50**

The Chocolate Wreath Box, Hotel Chocolat, **£45**



Winnie the Pooh
BLONDE CHOCOLATE HONEYCOMB
SELFRIDGES

Winnie the Pooh Blonde Chocolate Honeycomb, Selfridges, **£12.95**

GONK Hot Chocolate Melt

Gonk Hot Chocolate Melt, Lakeland, **£3.99**

NEOM
WELLBEING | LONDON
COSY NIGHTS SCENTED CANDLE

Cosy Nights Scented Candle, Neom, **£40**

Quality Street

Quality Street tin, Home Bargains, **£8.49**

Go for gold

6-24, Matalan, **£28**

6-22, Next, **£35**

4-28, Shopcider.com, **£31**

6-24, Tu at Sainsbury's, **£38**

6-22, Marks & Spencer, **£46**

Dress to impress

Get ready to dazzle this festive season in the high street's most fabulous frocks

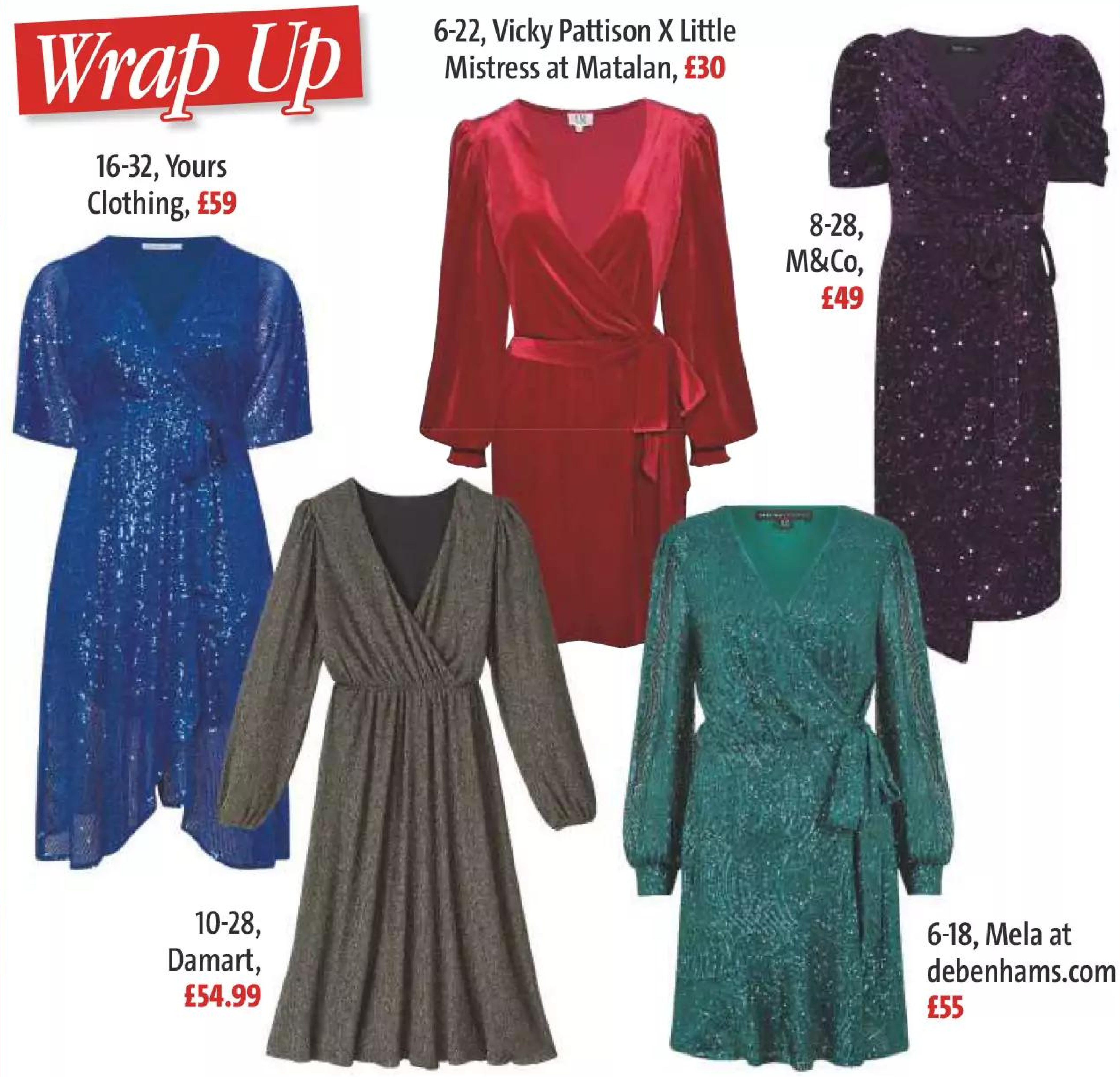
Dress, 6-20, **£89**, Friends like These at Next; **Earrings, £2.50**; **Bracelet, £4**, both Primark; **Bag, £46**, River Island; **Shoes, £39**, Next

Wear metallics the grown-up way by pairing your dress with a simple black bag and shoes

Dress, 8-22, Kaleidoscope at Freemans; **Earrings, £5.99,** New Look; **Necklace, £18,** Next; **Rings, £3.50,** Primark; **Shoes, £46,** River Island

This universally flattering shape is perfect for creating a streamlined silhouette

Wrap Up



16-32, Yours Clothing, **£59**

6-22, Vicky Pattison X Little Mistress at Matalan, **£30**

8-28, M&Co, **£49**

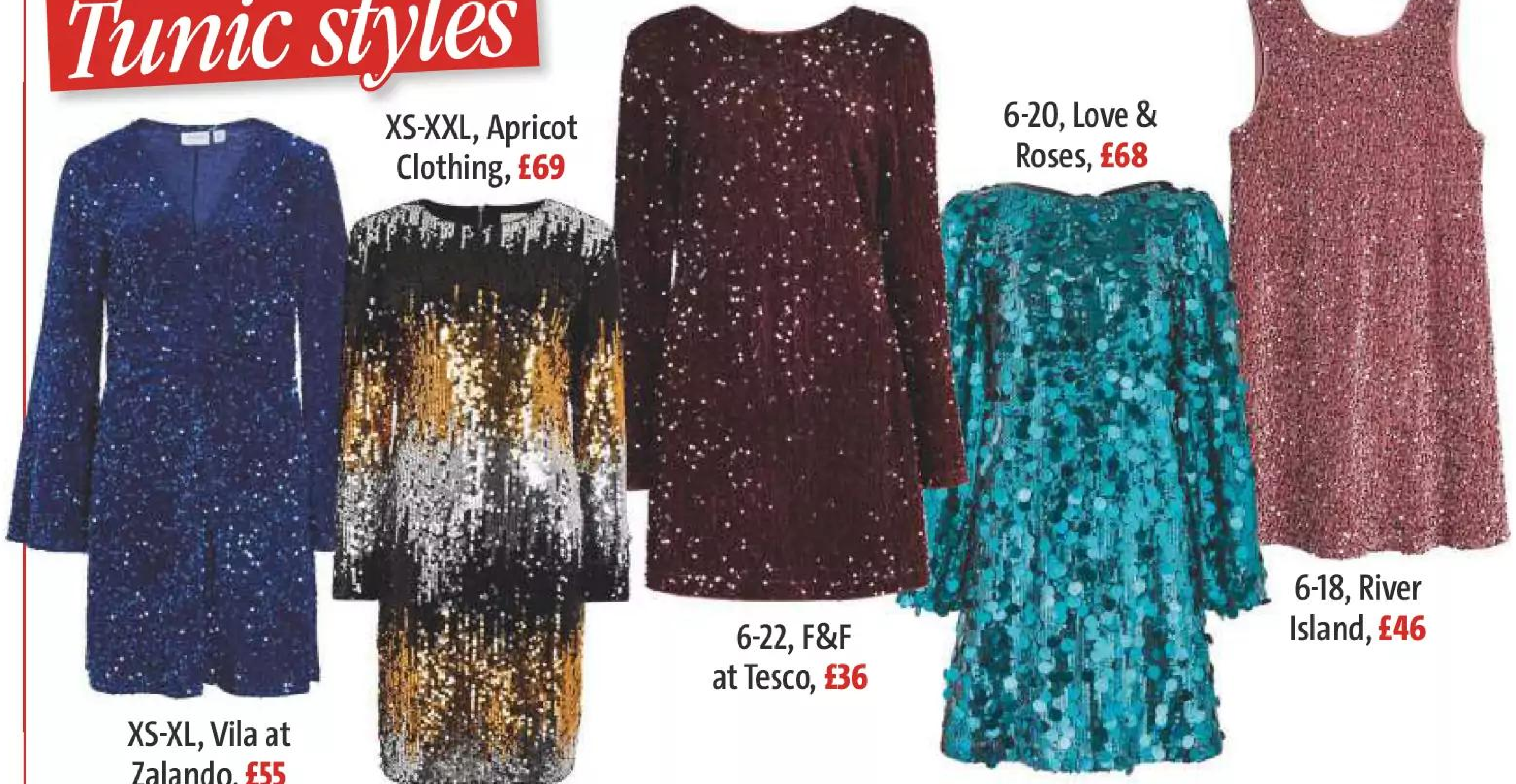
10-28, Damart, **£54.99**

6-18, Mela at debenhams.com **£55**

Dress, 6-22, **£32,** Matalan; **Earrings, £5.99,** New Look; **Bag, £14,** Primark; **Shoes, £39,** River Island

A loose-fitting style will look effortlessly cool when paired with tights and a blazer

Tunic styles



XS-XXL, Apricot Clothing, **£69**

6-20, Love & Roses, **£68**

XS-XL, Vila at Zalando, **£55**

6-22, F&F at Tesco, **£36**

6-18, River Island, **£46**

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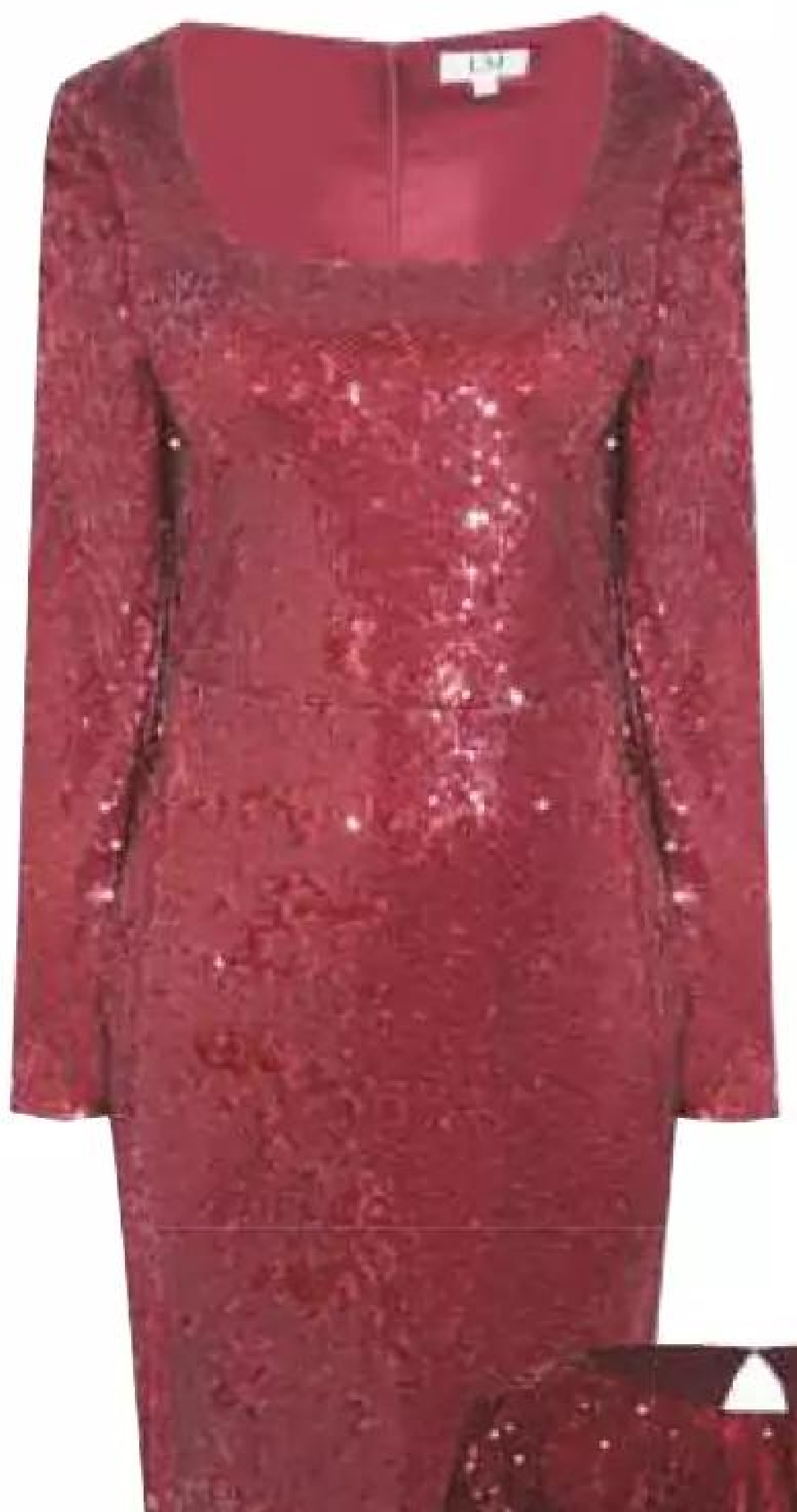
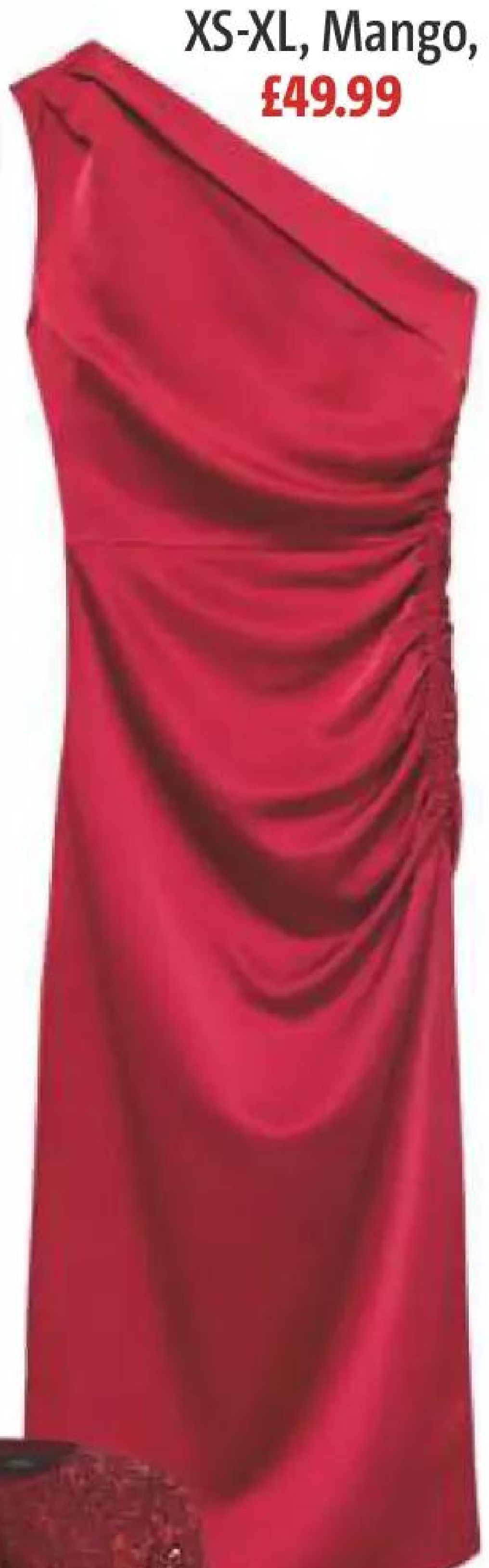
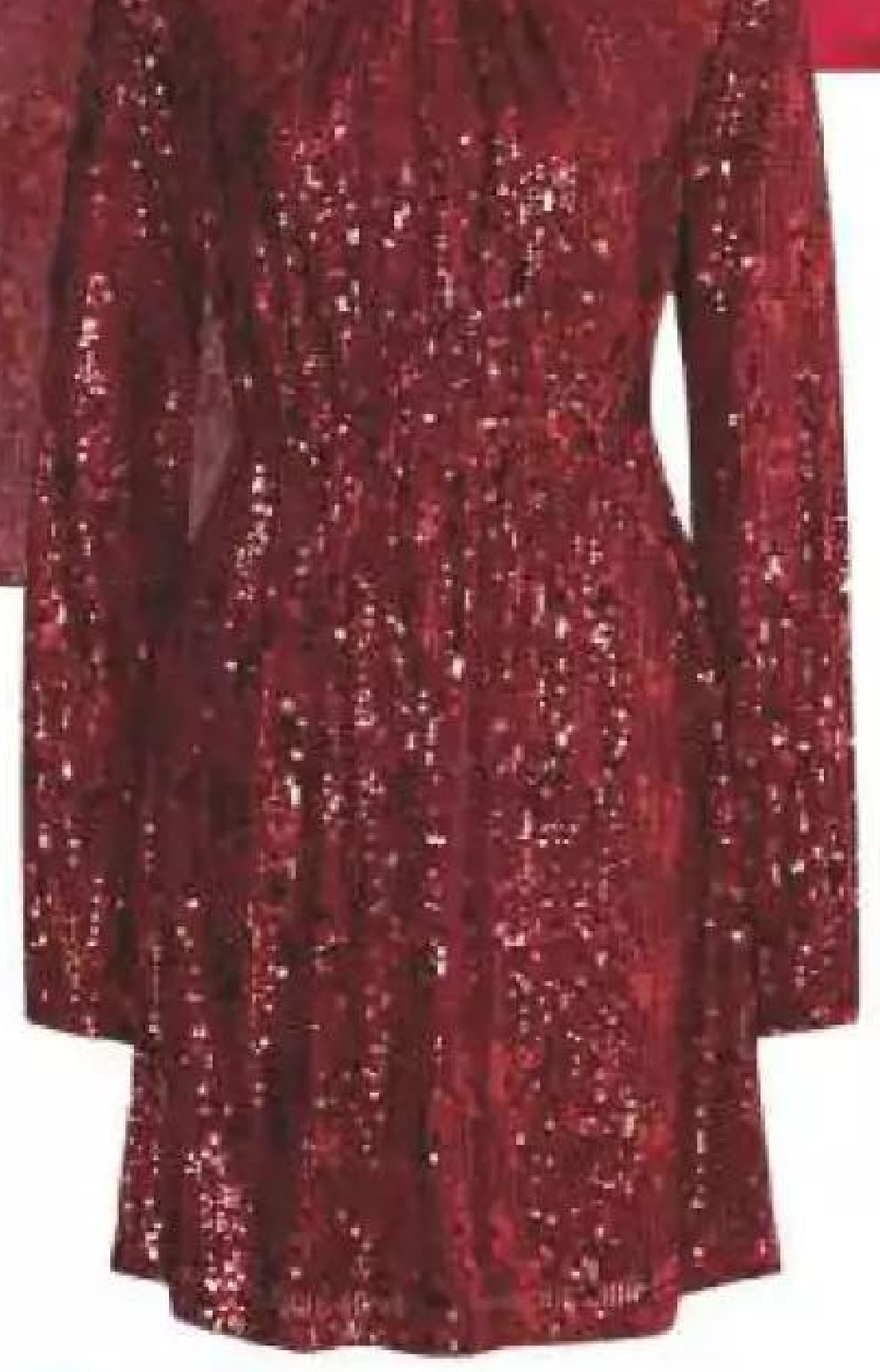
Red alert



6-22, Vicky Pattison X Little Mistress at Matalan, **£45**

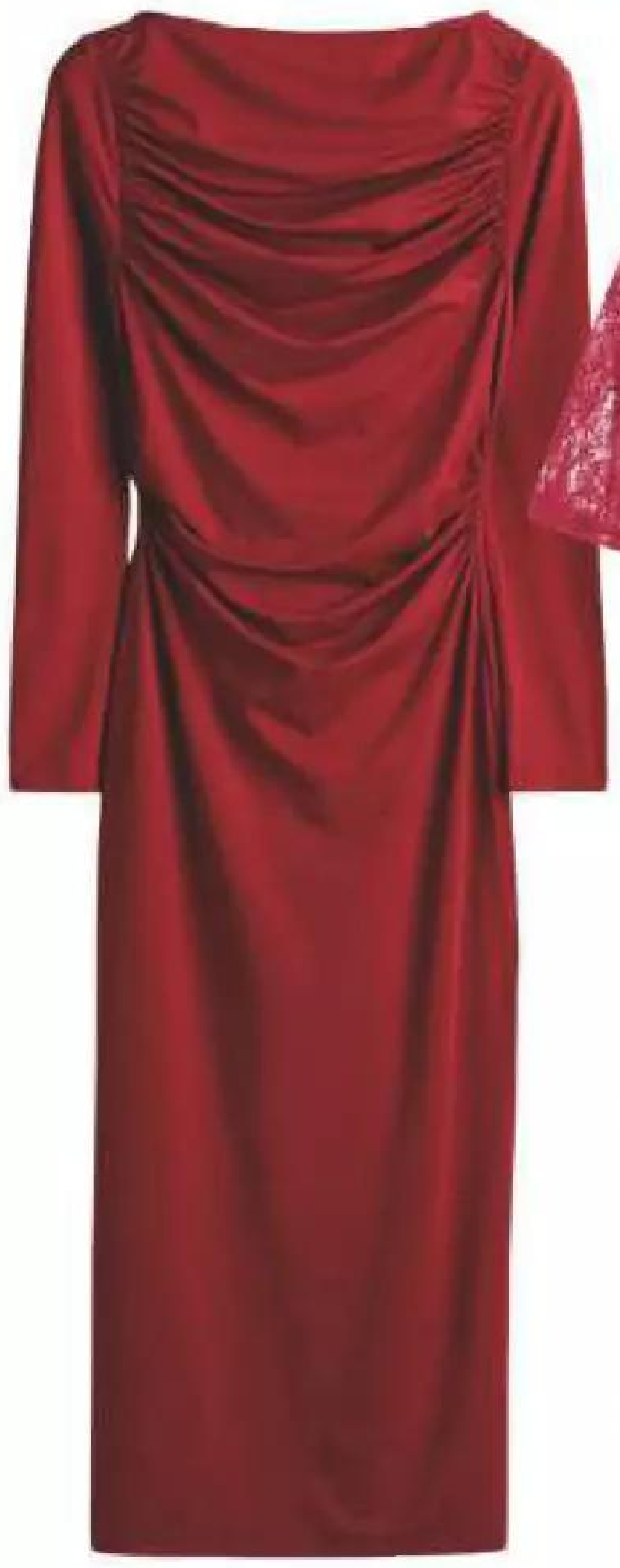


XS-XL, Mango, **£49.99**

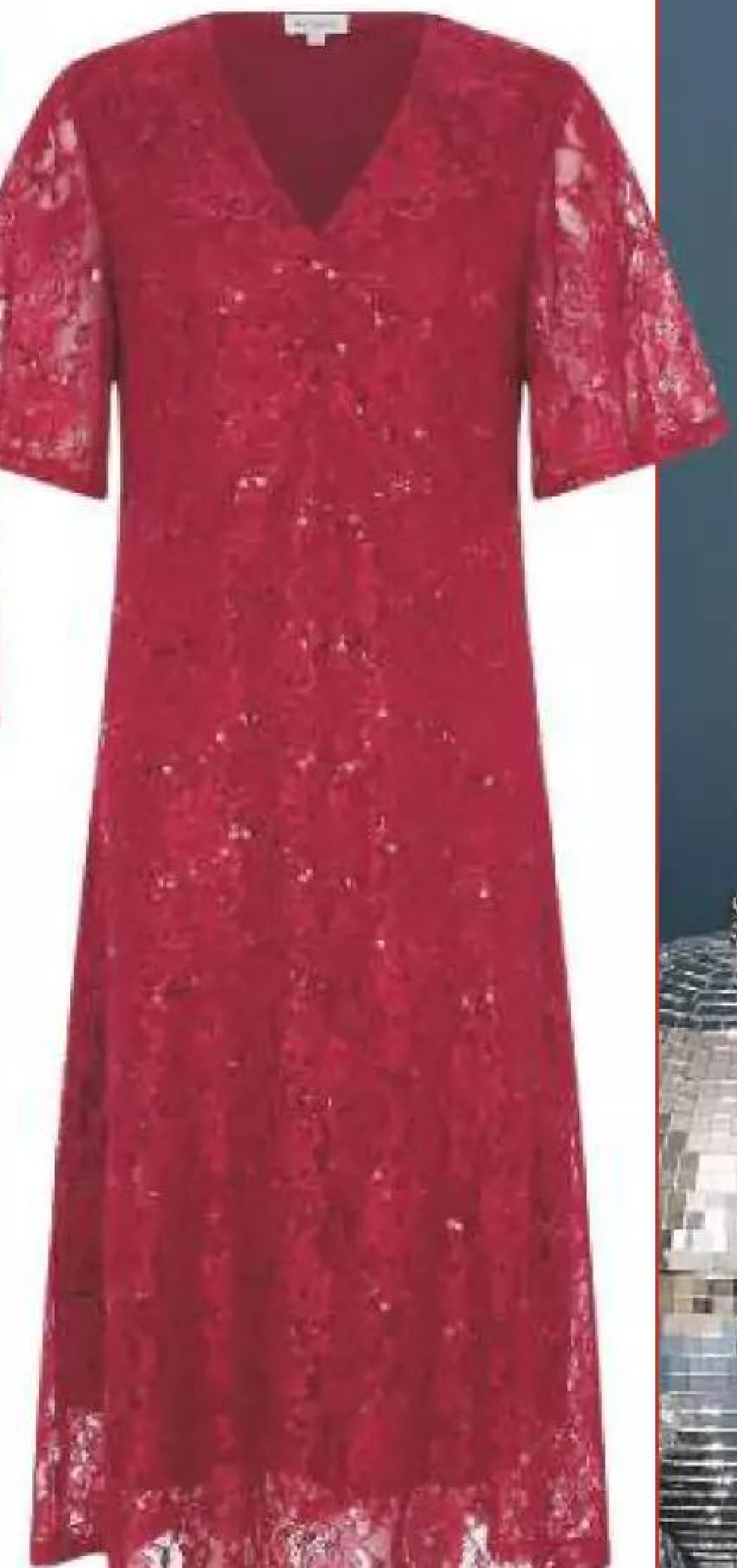


8-24, George at ASDA, **£19.98**

Pair these scarlet styles with a bronze eyeshadow and nude lipstick for an elegant, party look



XS-XL, H&M, **£27.99**



10-28, Bonmarché, **£32**

Dress, 8-24, **£70**, Monsoon; **Earrings, £5.99**; Shoes, **£39.99**, both New Look; **Necklace, £18**, Next; **Bag, £46**, River Island

Photographer: Joseph Montezinos; **Styled by:** Cigdem Tanrioglu; **Model:** Josephine at MOT Models; **Hair & Make Up:** Aimee Adams using Sculpted By Aimee and Phil Smith Professional Haircare; **Art Editor:** Hannah Dunger; **Styling assistants:** Mimi Townsend and Holly Downes. Disco balls courtesy of Dunelm and George at ASDA

The LBD

6-22, F&F at Tesco, £39.50

XS-XXL, H&M, £54.99

6-18, Yumi, £65

8-20, Needs No Label, £54.99

10-28, Bonmarché, £28

Dress, 6-22, **£95**, Next;
Earrings, £5.99, New Look;
Bag, £44, River Island,
Shoes, £20, Primark

Sequins, feathers, and metallic accents will provide a modern twist to this timeless style

Dress, 6-22, **£31.99**;
Bracelet, £9.99, both
New Look; **Earrings, £18**,
River Island; **Bag, £38**,
Next; **Shoes, £34.99**, Quiz

Velvet textures are excellent for smoothing any lumps and bumps without the need for shapewear

Plush textures

6-22, Next, £45

6-18, Joe Browns, £55

8-24, Long Tall Sally, £35

14-32, Yours Clothing, £52

6-18, River Island, £56

tv choice

AWARDS 2026

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The shortlist has been announced - vote now for your ultimate winning stars and shows!

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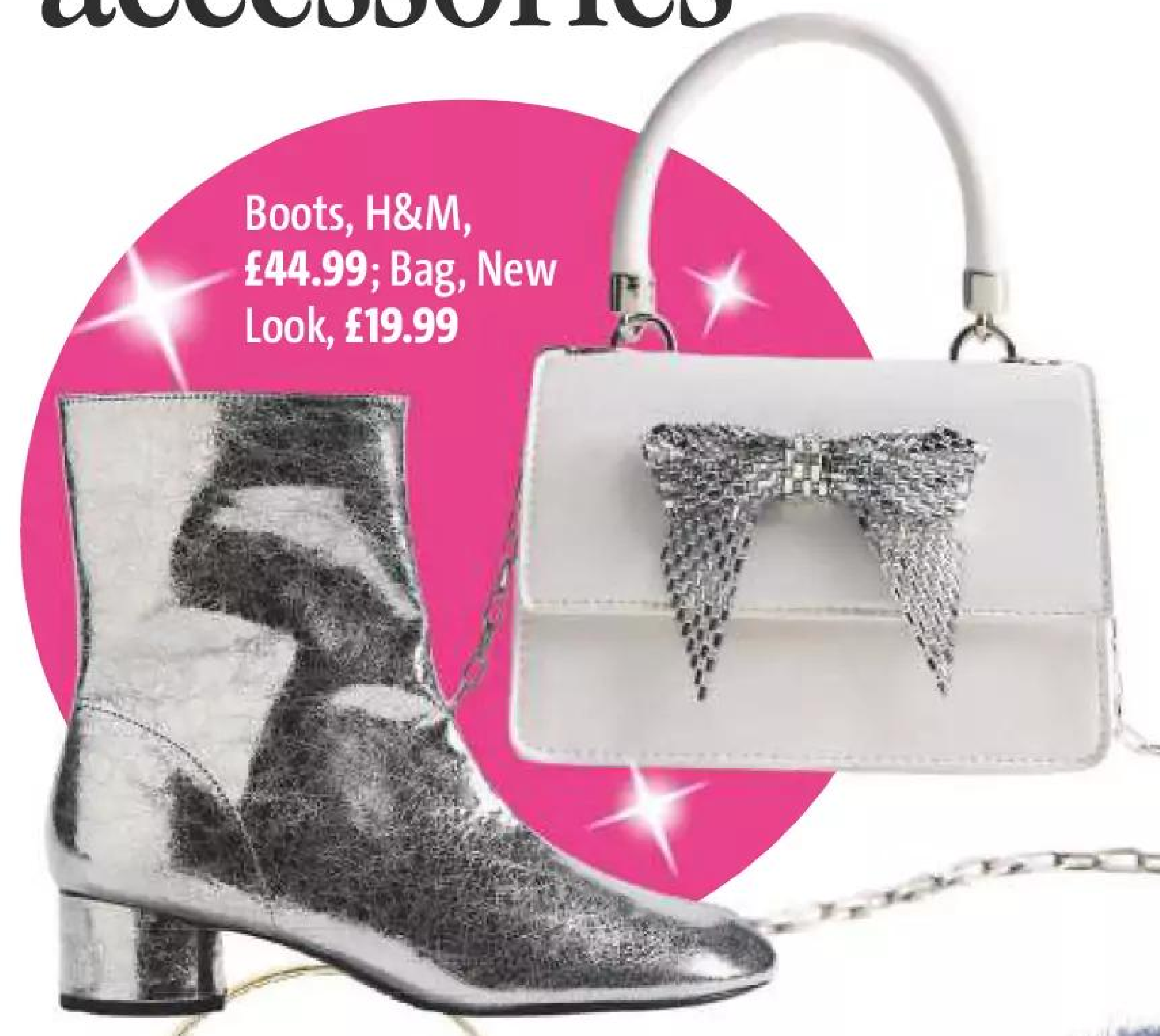
T&C's: This competition is open to UK residents aged 18 and over. The prize draw opens twice - midday on Tuesday 30th September 2025 until midnight on Tuesday 14th October 2025 during the longlist voting phase, and reopens midday on Friday 31st October 2025 until midnight on Sunday 16th November 2025 during the shortlist voting phase. Entries from both the longlist and shortlist phases of the voting will be eligible. Whilst you may vote more than once, you will only be allowed one entry into the prize draw. The prize includes one pair of tickets to the 2026 TV Choice Awards taking place at The London Hilton on Park Lane on Monday 2nd February 2026 and one night's accommodation in a standard twin room at The London Hilton on Park Lane on a bed & breakfast basis. Both attendees must be over the age of 18 at the time of the event. ID may be required as proof of age as alcohol may be served at the event. The winners will have access to the awards ceremony, dinner and after-party. Travel to and from the venue and any other food and drink is not included. The winner will be the first name drawn at random after the closing date. The winner will be notified by email within 10 days of the closing date and has 10 days to respond before an alternative winner is chosen. This prize may be offered in a limited number of other promotions. No purchase is necessary, to enter for free visit www.tvchoicemagazine.co.uk/vote. Full terms and conditions can be found at www.bauerlegal.co.uk/competition-terms.html

tv choice

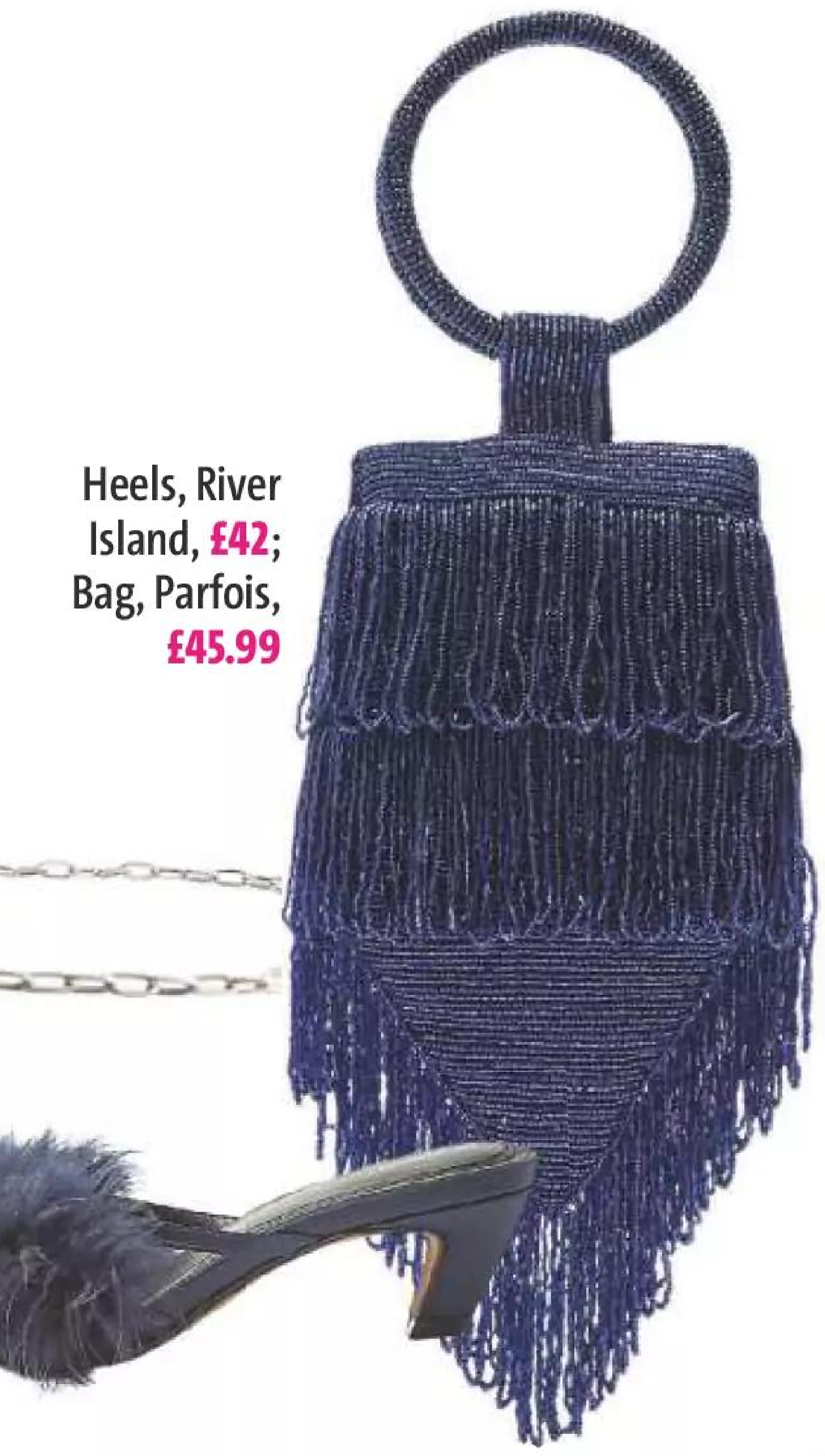
The UK's favourite TV magazine

Dynamic DUOS

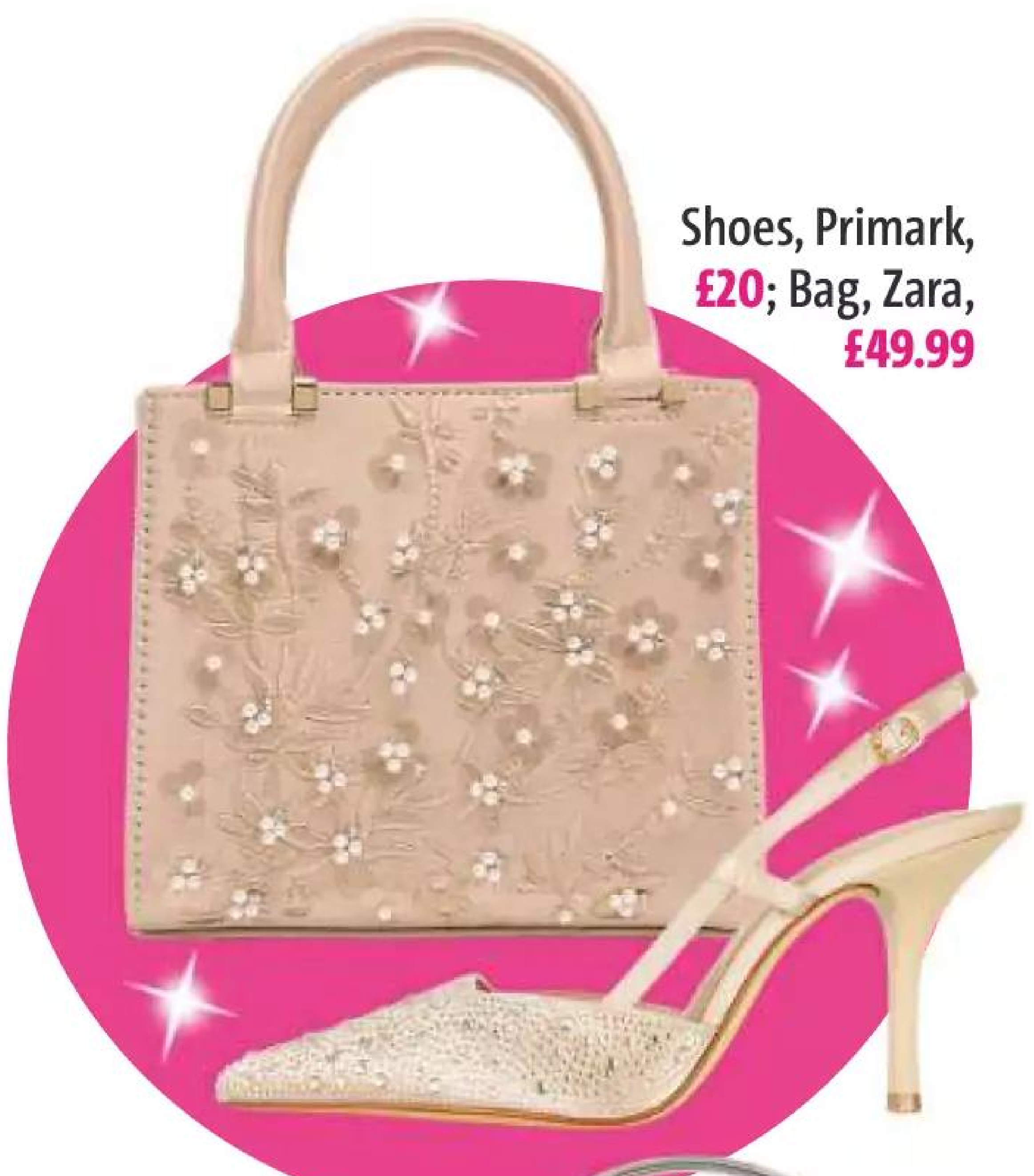
Time to party with these bag and shoe pairings



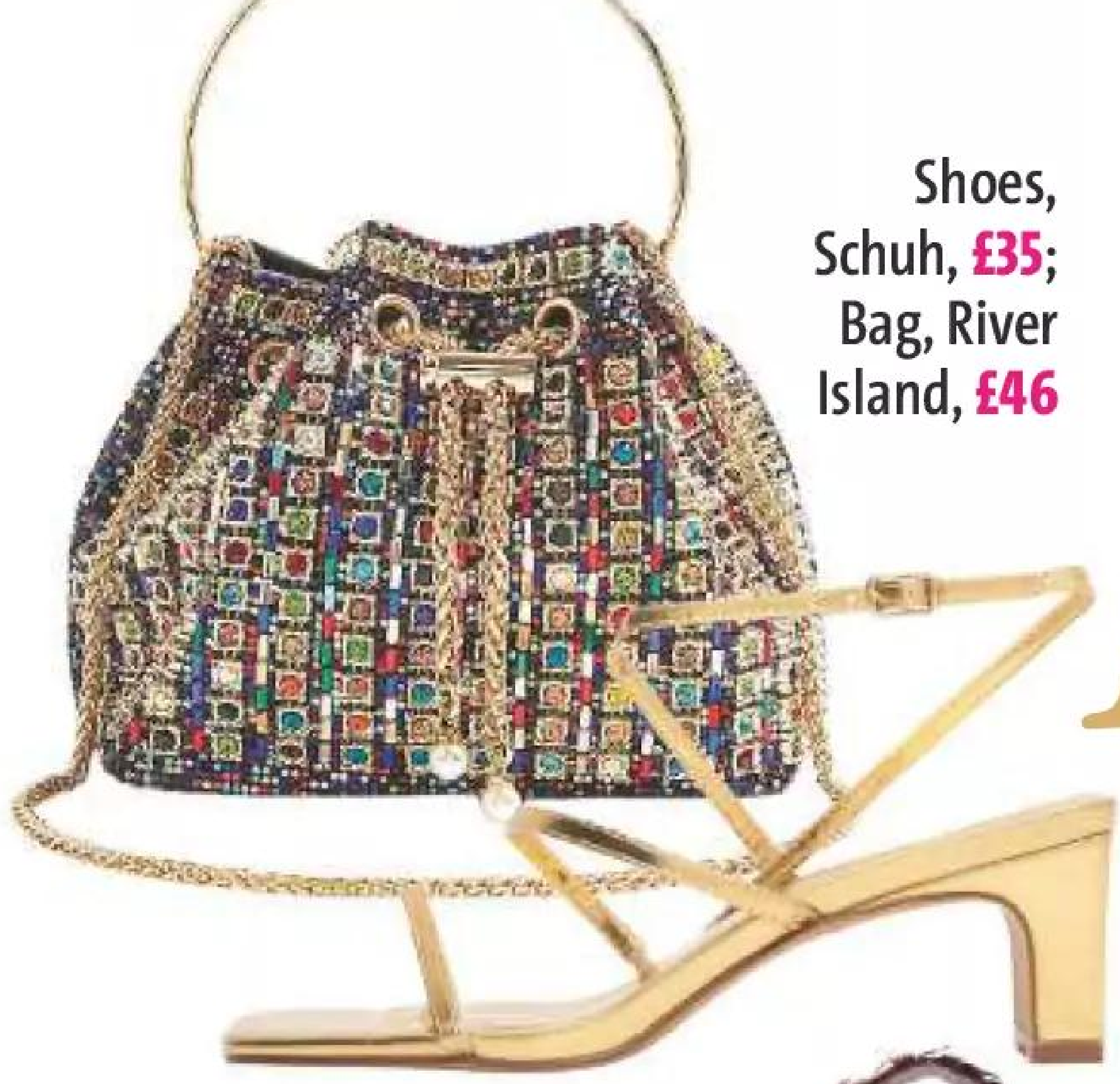
Boots, H&M, **£44.99**; Bag, New Look, **£19.99**



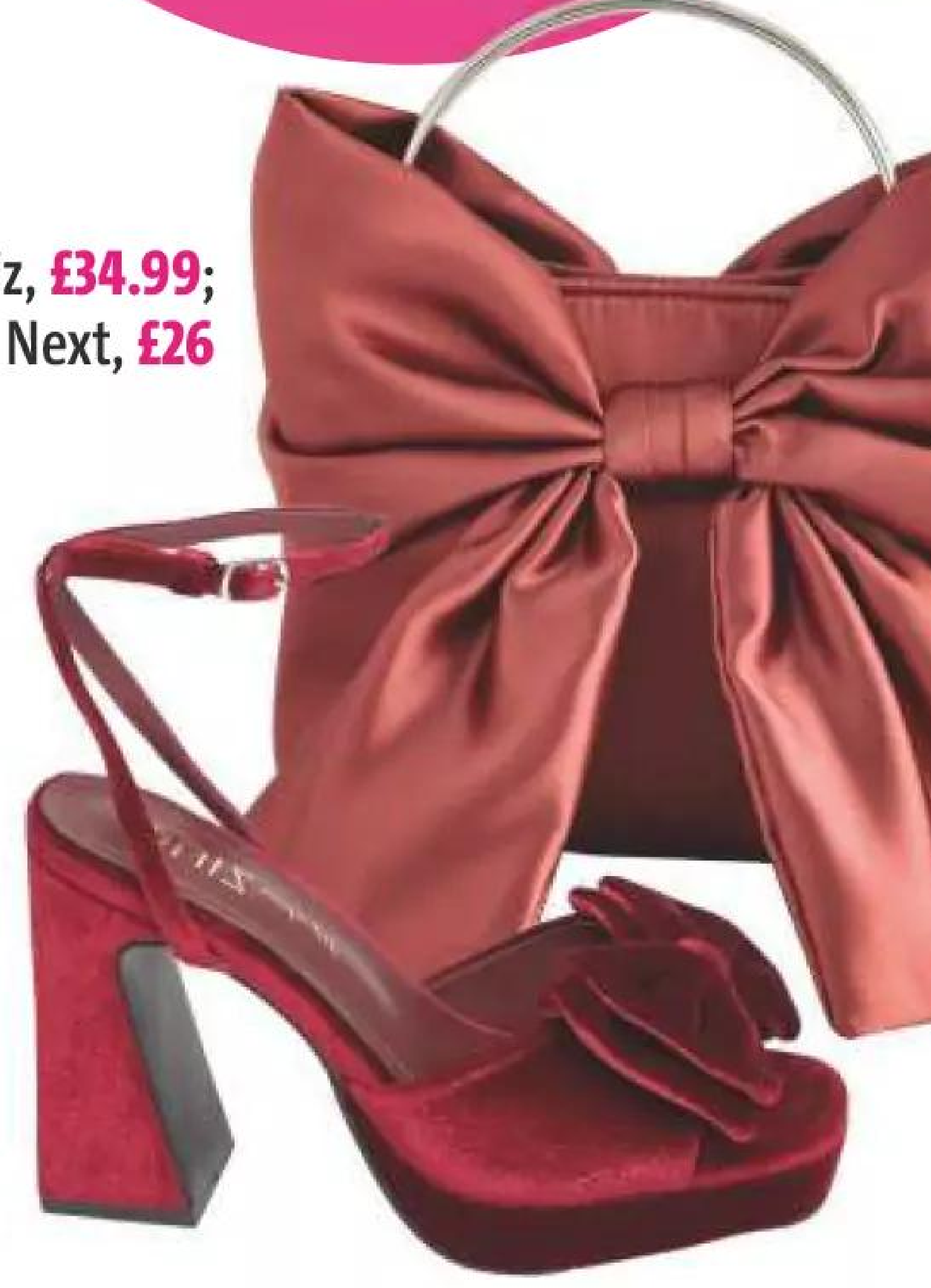
Heels, River Island, **£42**; Bag, Parfois, **£45.99**



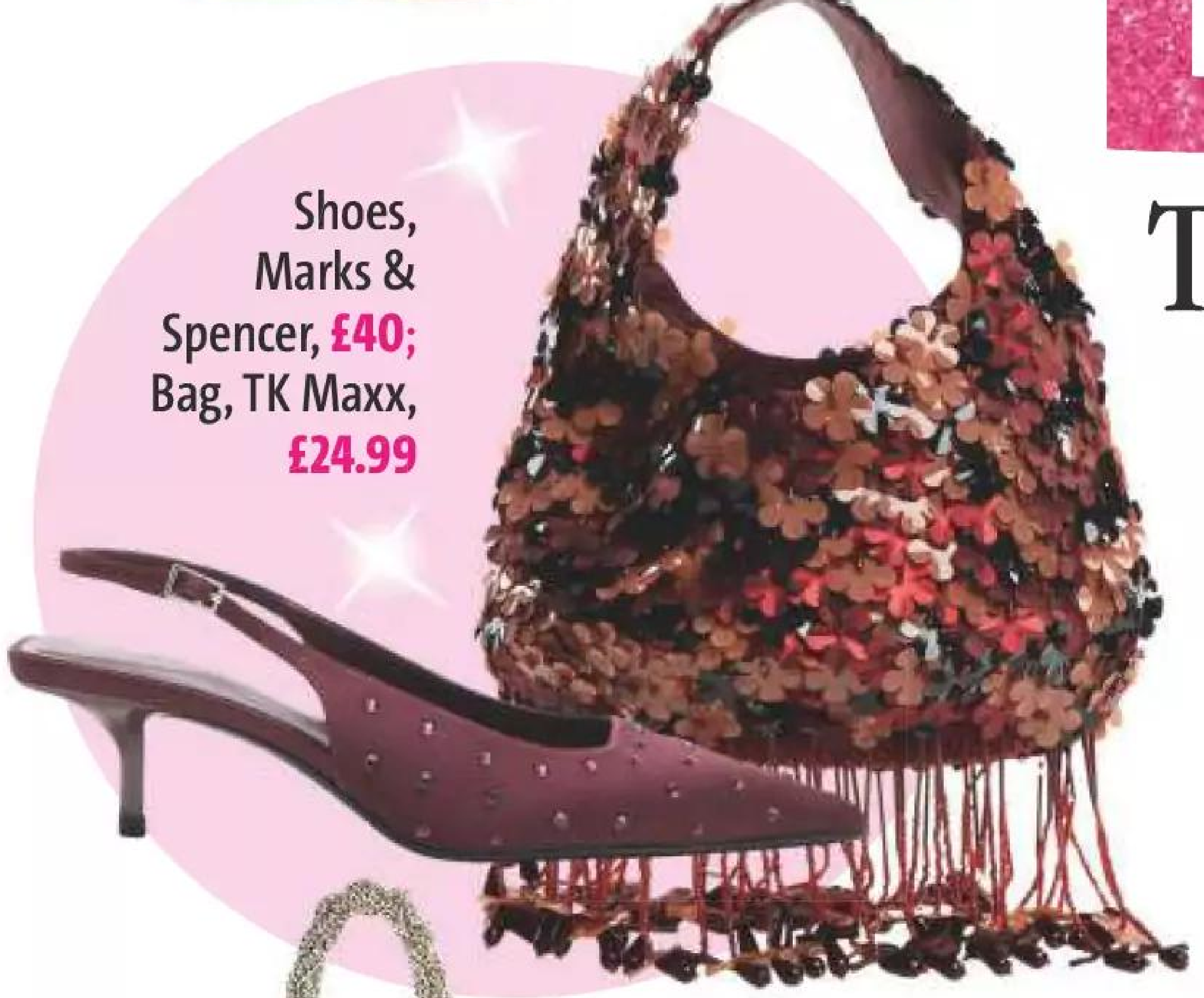
Shoes, Primark, **£20**; Bag, Zara, **£49.99**



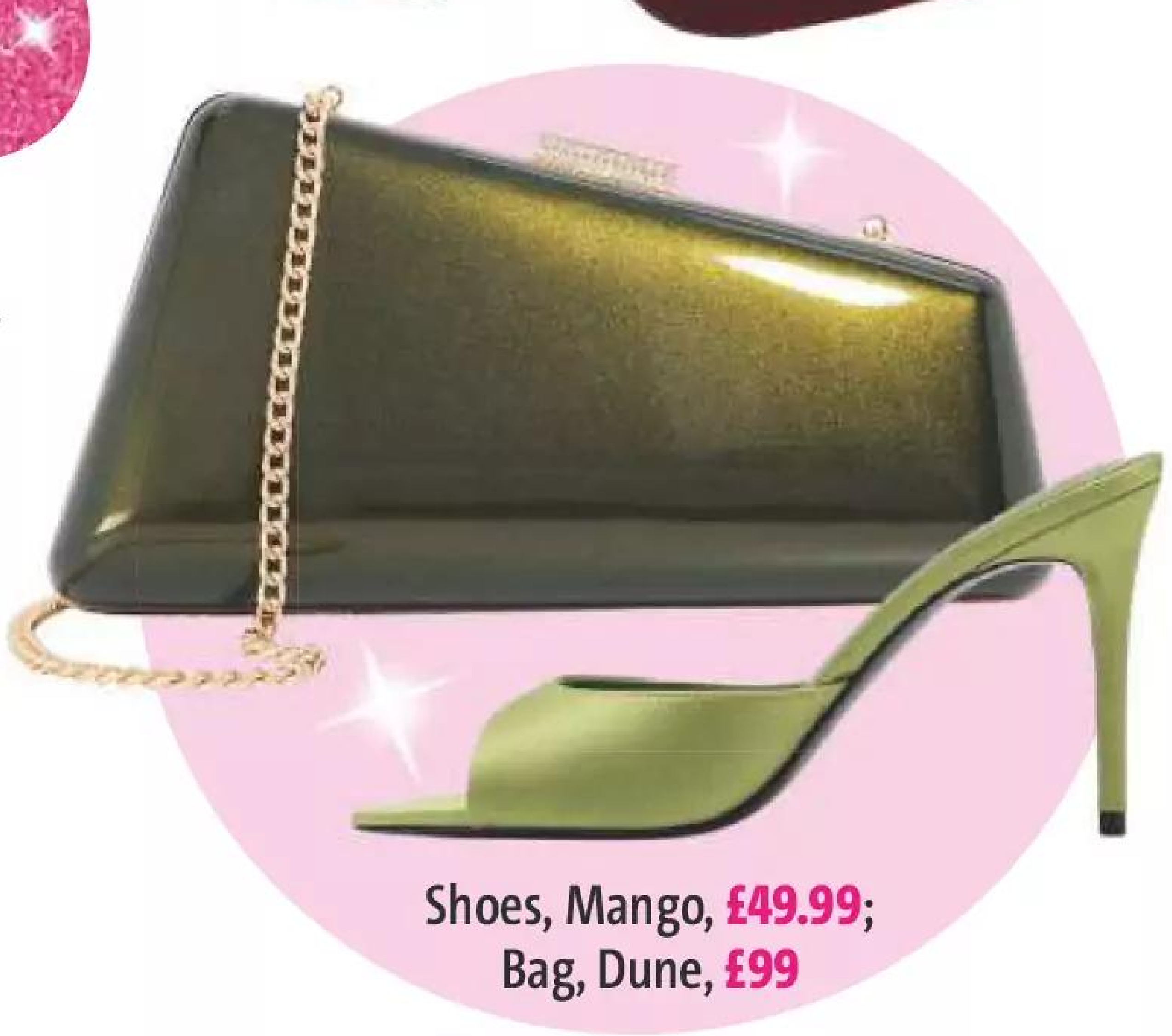
Shoes, Schuh, **£35**; Bag, River Island, **£46**



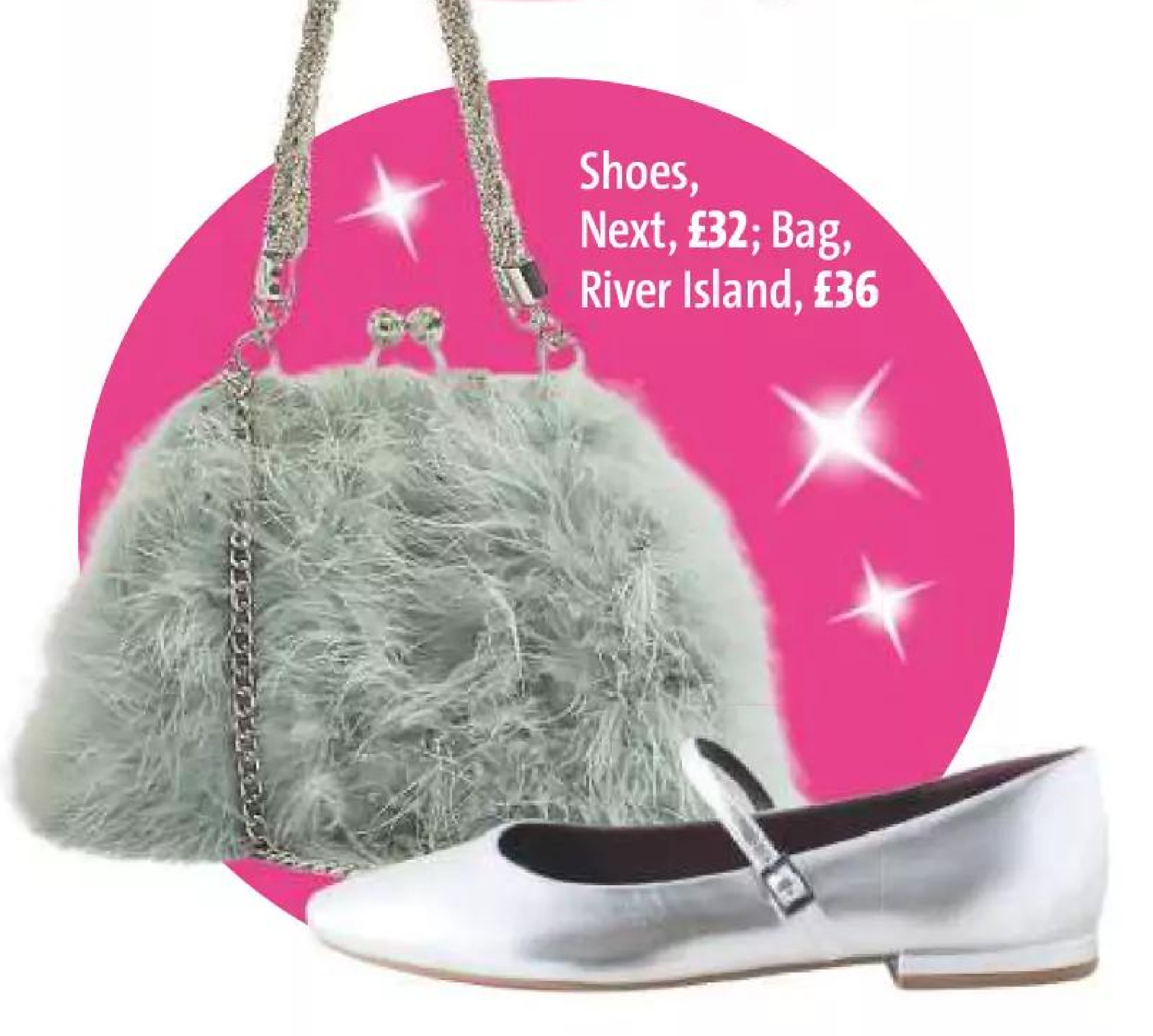
Shoes, Quiz, **£34.99**; Bag, Next, **£26**



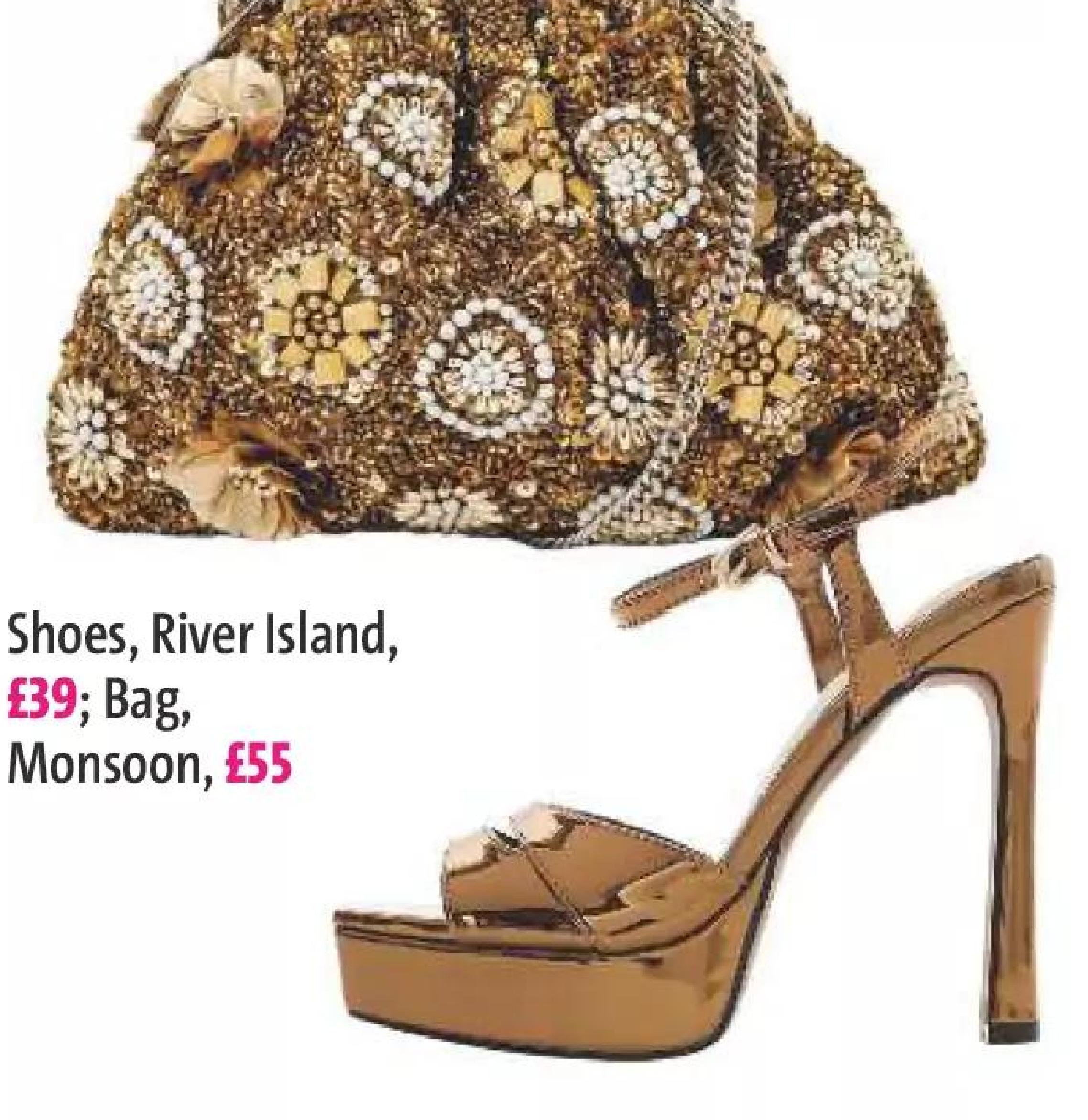
Shoes, Marks & Spencer, **£40**; Bag, TK Maxx, **£24.99**



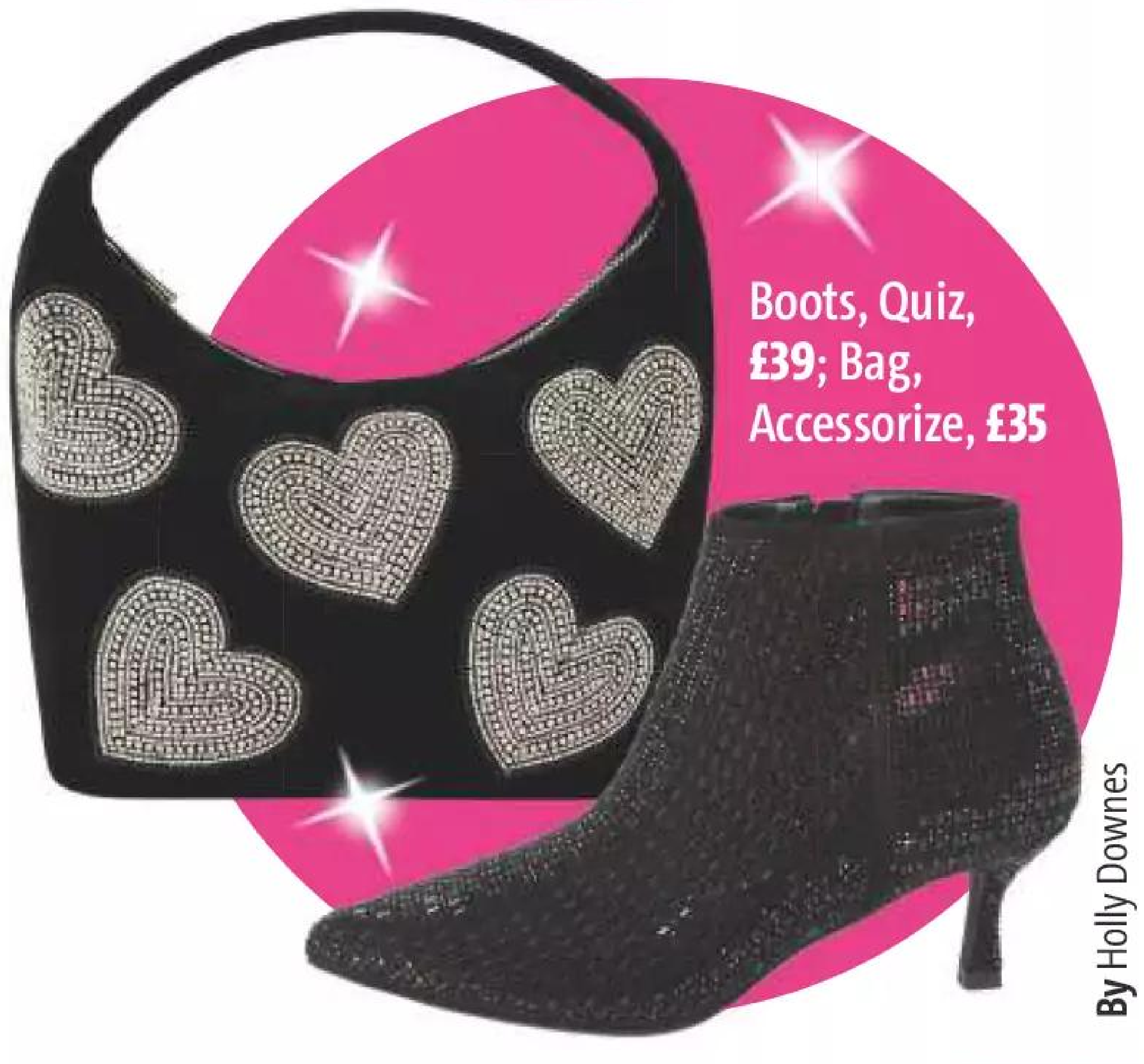
Shoes, Mango, **£49.99**; Bag, Dune, **£99**



Shoes, Next, **£32**; Bag, River Island, **£36**



Shoes, River Island, **£39**; Bag, Monsoon, **£55**



Boots, Quiz, **£39**; Bag, Accessorize, **£35**

By Holly Downes

Party Perfect

Look and feel your very best this Xmas with these easy swaps

Ace that base

Instead of your daily lightweight tint, reach for a long-lasting foundation to create an airbrushed complexion worthy of those festive photographs. **Kay Beauty Soft Matte Full Coverage Foundation, £18**, is a great choice as it offers plenty of coverage without looking cakey. Brushing on a setting powder can also help to blur imperfections and prolong your makeup's staying power. Invest in **Laura Mercier Translucent Loose Setting Powder, £38.50**. The powder, loved by make-up artists, helps to control shine without clogging pores. Finally, set your look in place with a setting spray, such as **L'Oréal Paris Setting Spray, £9.99**.

New launch
L'ORÉAL PARIS
INFAILLIBLE
3-SECOND SETTING MIST
36H NO TRANSFER
LAURA MERCIER

NARS
moondust
URBAN DECAY
e.l.f.
NO BUDGE SHADOW STICK

Liven-up lids

Whether you're going bold or keeping it simple, it is important to prime your eyelids. We recommend gently applying a mattifying concealer, such as **NARS Soft Matte Complete Concealer, £28**, to help keep your eyeshadow in place all night. Cream eyeshadows tend to be most flattering for mature eyes, with eyeshadow crayons leading the way thanks to their easy application. *Bella* loves **e.l.f. No Budge Shadow Stick, £7**, which offers pigmented, blendable colour in a variety of shades. If you have neither the time nor the patience to layer and blend when it comes to creating a lid look, try dabbing a shimmery shadow, such as **Urban Decay 24/7 Mono Moondust Eyeshadow in Rebel Star, £21**, onto the inner corners of each eye. This will add some sparkle while creating the illusion of larger, brighter eyes.

Boost cheeks

If the winter months leave your skin looking dull, try switching your powder bronzer for a creamy formula to help restore that natural glow. **No7 Pro Artist Soft Glow Cream Bronzer,** £19.95, is a firm favourite and offers a soft shimmer similar to a high-end option. When it comes to blush, jelly-textured cheek stains are great, especially when paired with a powder, as this gives it a more long-lasting finish. Start by applying **Revolution Jelly Blush Stick Lip and Cheek Stain,** £5.99, to the apples of your cheeks, followed by a powder blush such as **Saie SuperSuede Radiant Blush Powder,** £24. This way, the powder has something to stick onto. Pat a liquid highlighter, such as **Sculpted By Aimee Liquid Lights Highlight,** £18, over your high points, such as your cheekbones, the tip of your nose and along your brow to enhance your facial features.

No7
JELLY BLUSH
LIP & CHEEK STAIN
saie

Define your pout

The ultimate finishing touch? A classic red lip. Prep your lips with a liner to prevent the lipstick from bleeding or feathering and create a fuller look. Starting at the Cupid's bow, trace lightly around your natural lip line with **Anastasia Beverly Hills Lip Liner in Cranberry, £18**. Apply using short strokes to avoid creating a heavy, solid line. Next, swipe a pigmented lipstick, like **W7 Lippy Chic in Tongue & Cheek, £4.50**, onto the lips. **Givenchy Le Rouge Deep Velvet Powdery Matte Lipstick in Rouge Santal, £37**, is another great, long-lasting option for those wanting to invest in a crimson shade. Alternatively, balance bold eyes with a soft nude using **Beauty Pie Futurelipstick Luxe Shine in Nude Blush, £17**, which will add a touch of peachy warmth to complete your look.

BEAUTY
W7
Lippy Chic!
GIVENCHY
GIVENCHY
ANASTASIA

By Phoebe Denman, **Pictures** Getty

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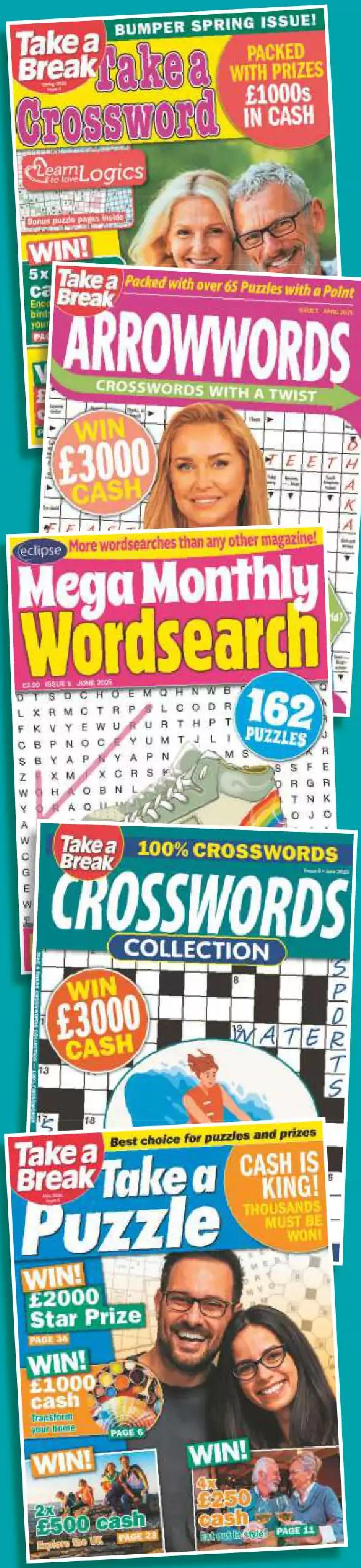

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Festive TREATS

Give your beauty routine a dose of sugar, spice and all things nice

Merry & Bright

Get into the spirit of self-care with Patchology's gingerbread-scented eye patches. Infused with soothing marshmallow root and hydrating sugarcane, they're the sweetest way to refresh tired eyes.
Patchology Holiday Treats Limited Edition Eye Gels, £12

Sugarplum Fairy

Give dry hands the TLC they deserve with this rich cream. Packed with shea butter, cocoa seed butter and almond oil, it soothes and moisturises skin – and smells like a plum sorbet dream.
The Body Shop Sugarplum Passion Hand Balm, £7

Pear Perfection

Christmas is the perfect excuse to indulge in a luxurious shower routine, and Lush's Golden Pear Shower Gel delivers just that. It blends juicy pear with spicy cardamom, leaving skin soft, clean and beautifully scented.
Lush Golden Pear Shower Gel, from £9

Cocoa Kiss

Say goodbye to dry, cracked lips with Laneige's Lip Sleeping Mask. The hydrating formula works overnight to nourish and smooth, revealing a super-soft pout by morning. Their latest flavour is inspired by a cup of hot chocolate.
Laneige Lip Sleeping Mask Hot Cocoa, £21

Glow All The Way

The cult cleanser we all adore just got festive! This creamy formula melts away make-up and impurities for clear, glowing skin, while notes of bergamot and cardamom add a touch of seasonal magic to every cleanse.
Liz Earle Cleanse & Polish Bergamot & Cardamom Gift Set, £36

Candy Cane Care

Get mistletoe-ready with Lanolips' ultra-hydrating balm. Powered by lanolin and vitamin E, it restores softness in a swipe – while the limited-edition candy cane fragrance leaves lips feeling minty-fresh.
Lanolips 101 Ointment Multi-Balm Candy Cane, £8.99

Scent The Halls

Capture the warmth of Christmas with aromas of juicy mandarin, sweet orange and rich prune. Base notes of sandalwood and amber create the perfect cosy, woody finish to carry you through the winter season.
Jo Malone Orange Bitters Cologne, from £59

Sweetest Skin

Ever dreamed of smelling like cinnamon and nutmeg? Fenty's limited-edition body lotion duo is loaded with indulgent oils and rich butters to deeply hydrate thirsty skin, wrapping you in a warm, spicy scent that's utterly irresistible.
Fenty Skin Lil Butta Dropz, £24

By Emma White

Your Christmas slim-down STARTS HERE

We've teamed up with Slimming World to bring you this fabulous eating plan

As the nights draw in and the chill sets deep, there's nothing more comforting than hearty, wholesome food that warms you from the inside out. We've teamed up with Slimming World to bring you an eating plan packed with warming recipes and clever swaps to keep you full and satisfied – and you could lose up to 7lb in your first two weeks!

HOW IT WORKS

1 Follow the menu. Feel free to repeat any days you enjoy!

2 Slimming World's eating plan, Food Optimising, is based on the science of energy density (the calories per gram in food), of satiety (how filling a food is) and how easy a food is to overeat. It's a simple way to cut calories without counting them and lose weight without going hungry

3 Free Food is at the heart of the Slimming World plan. These are the foods you can enjoy without weighing, measuring or counting. There are more than 350 Free Foods to choose from, many of which we have incorporated into this plan.

4 On top of this to ensure you're getting a balanced and nutritious diet, you can enjoy measured amounts of foods that provide calcium, like milk and cheese, as well as foods providing fibre and other essential minerals and nutrients. We've incorporated lots of fibre into this plan for you.

5 In addition, choose from two of the following each day: 350ml skimmed milk, 250ml semi-skimmed milk, 400ml plain unsweetened soya/almond milk with added calcium, 30g full-fat hard cheese or 40g reduced-fat hard cheese. Some days these have been included within your meal choices. Choose from one on these days.

6 Don't forget to treat yourself! Enjoy up to two options from the snack list provided every day.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- Stay hydrated: Aim to have between 6 and 8 drinks a day – choose water or sugar-free drinks
- Don't go it alone: Studies show Slimming World members eat more healthily than the general population, so the whole household can enjoy the same meals alongside you
- For extra fibre, filling power and health benefits, try to include wholegrains such as wholemeal pasta, brown rice and wholewheat couscous where you can.

Breakfasts and lunches all serve one, unless otherwise stated, and dinners, serve four.

JOIN A GROUP FOR FREE!

All breakfasts and lunches serve one, and dinners serve four, unless otherwise state.

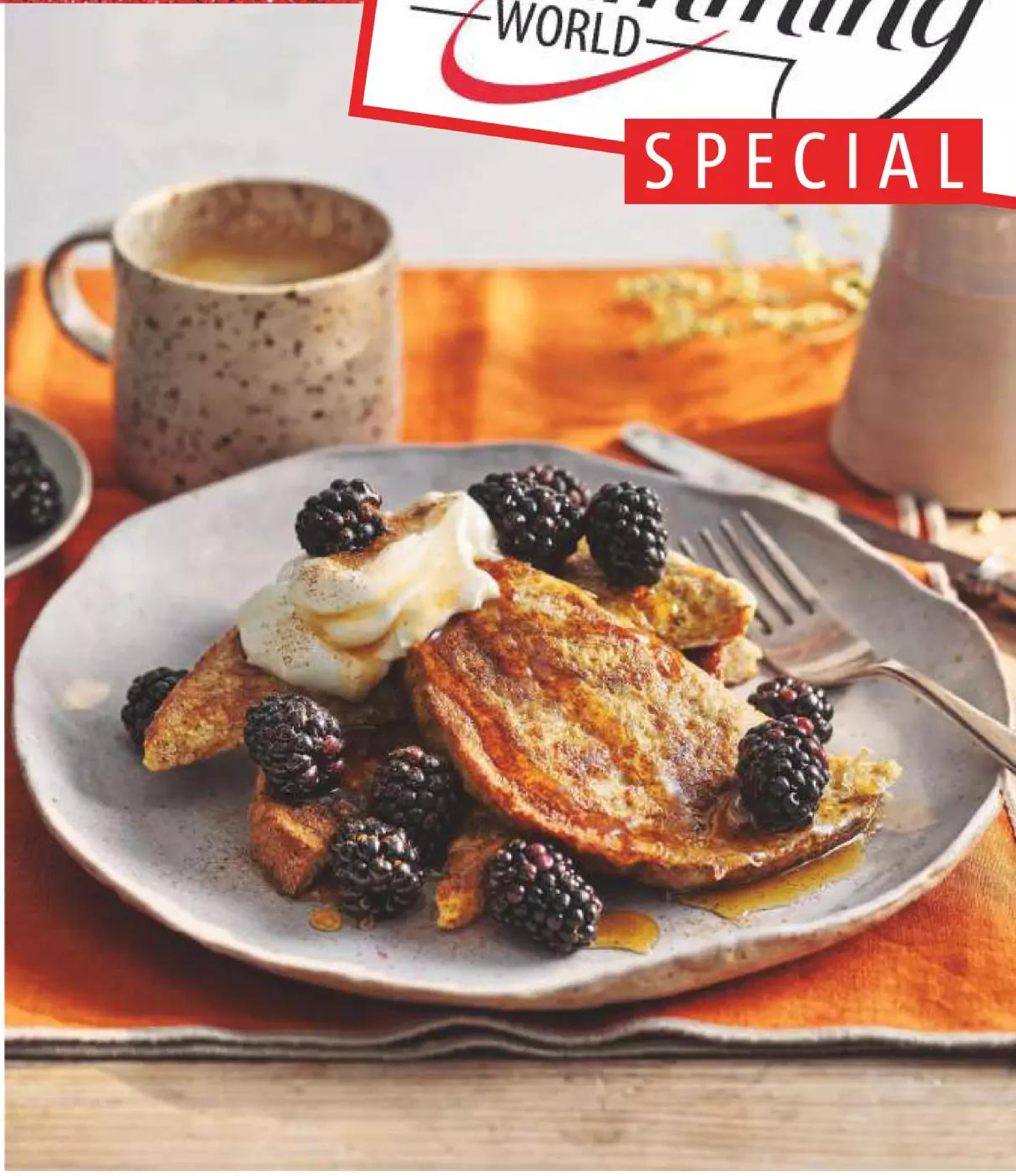
Breakfast choices

WINTER SPICED FRENCH TOAST

Whisk together 4 eggs, two pinches each of ground ginger and nutmeg, ¼tsp ground cinnamon, 2 level tsp sweetener and 4tbsp water. Add 4 slices of wholemeal bread (from a small 400g loaf) and soak for 3-4 minutes on each side. Spray a frying pan with low-calorie cooking spray and fry until golden. Cut each slice into triangles and divide between 2 plates. Top with fat-free Greek yogurt, fresh blackberries (or any fresh fruit of your choice) and drizzle with 1 level tsp maple syrup to serve. *This recipe serves 2.*

EGG AND BACON CUPS

Place 4 halved tomatoes and 4 portobello mushrooms on a baking tray, spray with low-calorie cooking spray, and roast for 30 minutes. Meanwhile, spray 4 holes of a muffin tin with a low-calorie cooking spray. Flatten 4 slices of wholemeal bread (from a small 400g loaf) and press one into each hole. Cook 4 bacon rashers (all visible fat removed) for 1 minute per side, cut in half, and line each bread cup with 2 pieces. After 10 minutes, crack an egg into each bread cup and bake until set. Loosen with a knife, divide between 2 plates and serve. *This recipe serves 2.*



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BERRY BIX
Top 2 wholewheat cereal biscuits with milk (from your allowance) and chopped fresh strawberries, or any fresh fruit you prefer. You can drizzle over 1 level tsp honey to serve.

ULTIMATE BREAKFAST BAP
Spray a frying pan with low-calorie cooking spray and fry 2 portobello mushrooms and 2 tomato slices then grill for 8–10 minutes, turning halfway. Add 4 bacon rashers (all visible fat removed) and grill for 3 minutes per side. Meanwhile, whisk 4 eggs with chopped fresh chives, 40g reduced-fat Cheddar cheese, and season lightly. Cook half the mix in a small pan for 2 minutes per side to make an omelette, then repeat. Toast 2 x 60g wholemeal rolls, then fill with the omelettes, mushroom, tomato, bacon and 2 tbsp ketchup. Serve hot. *This recipe serves 2.*
Tip: To make this recipe vegetarian, replace bacon with chilled Quorn Vegetarian Bacon Slices

BANOFFEE OVERNIGHT OATS
Combine 40g plain porridge oats, 160g fat-free toffee yogurt (no added sugar), and 3tbsp cold water in a 500ml jar. Stir well, seal, and chill overnight. In the morning, slice 1 banana and grate 5g plain milk chocolate. Fold half the banana and a little chocolate into the oats, adding water if needed. Top with the rest of the banana and chocolate.

Lunch choices

TOMATO SOUP
Chop a red onion, a carrot and a celery stick and stir-fry in a pan with low-calorie cooking spray for 5 minutes. Add a can of chopped tomatoes, 2 tbsp tomato purée, 1 level tbsp sweetener and 600ml boiling vegetable stock. Simmer for 15 minutes and blitz until smooth. Add a swirl of plain quark and scatter with small basil leaves. Save any leftovers for another day.
Tip: Short on time? Pick up a Slimming World Soup of your choice from your local Iceland, The Food Warehouse or Dunnes store, and simply prepare according to pack instructions

TUNA AND SWEETCORN PASTA
Stir halved cherry tomatoes, sweetcorn and a drained can of tuna in spring water into some boiled dried pasta (any shape). Squeeze over lemon juice, season lightly and top with 40g reduced-fat Cheddar cheese and rocket to serve.

MEDITERRANEAN CHICKPEA SALAD
Chop some veg, like peppers (any colour), onion and cucumber and add to a bowl or lunchbox. Stir in some drained and rinsed chickpeas and 45g

chopped reduced-fat feta cheese. Season lightly, squeeze in lemon juice and serve with salad leaves and a dressing made by mixing together lemon juice, 2 tbsp white wine vinegar and chopped fresh parsley.

TURKEY TIKKA RICE

Preheat your oven to 220°C/fan 200°C/ gas 7. Put onion wedges in a small roasting tin, add 3tbsp water and lightly season. Roast for 15 minutes, then set aside to cool. Mix ½ tbsp curry powder, 1cm piece grated root ginger, ½ crushed garlic clove, 2tbsp fat-free natural yogurt, 1tsp lemon juice and a pinch of salt in a bowl. Add some skinless and boneless turkey breast chunks and toss well. Fry the turkey in a pan sprayed with low-calorie cooking spray until golden, turning once. Tip on to a plate and leave to go cold. Stir halved cherry tomatoes, some diced cucumber, ½tbsp lemon juice and freshly chopped mint leaves into some boiled rice and season lightly. Make a raita by mixing fat-free natural yogurt with diced cucumber and mint along with some salt and lemon juice to taste.

ROASTED CARROT PILAF

Preheat the oven to 200°C/fan 180°C/gas 6. Put a chopped onion, crushed seeds from 2 cardamom pods and 3 tbsp boiling vegetable stock in a saucepan. Cover and cook for 10 minutes. Uncover, increase the heat and cook until the liquid has evaporated. Meanwhile, put 300g sliced carrots in a roasting tin. Sprinkle over ½ tsp garam masala, 3tbsp water and season lightly. Toss well and roast for 25 minutes. Add some dried basmati rice, ¼ tsp turmeric and 150ml boiling vegetable stock to the onions and bring to the boil. Cook for 25 minutes on a low heat. Leave to cool, then tip the rice into a large bowl with the roasted carrots, a squeeze of lime juice and sliced spring onions. Sprinkle over coriander to serve. Save any leftovers for another day.

Dinner choices

MUSHROOM, LEEK AND BROCCOLI PIE

Ready in 1 hour

- **Low-calorie cooking spray**
- **2 leeks, rinsed and finely sliced into rings**
- **400g chestnut mushrooms, halved**
- **2 garlic cloves, crushed**
- **3 sprigs of fresh rosemary**
- **1 head of broccoli, cut into florets and stalks chopped into bite-size pieces**
- **500ml vegetable stock**
- **3 level tbsp cornflour**
- **10g fresh parsley, leaves finely chopped**
- **2 x 39g sheets filo pastry**
- **800g floury potatoes, peeled and chopped**
- **5 tbsp fat-free natural Greek-style yogurt**

Preheat your oven to 200°C/fan 180°C/ gas 6. Spray a large frying pan with the cooking spray and put over a medium heat. Once hot, add the leeks and mushrooms, and cook for 10 minutes, stirring frequently. Add the garlic with a splash of water and cook for 2-3 minutes. Add the rosemary, broccoli and stock, and bring to a gentle simmer. Put the cornflour in a bowl and stir in a little water to form a thin paste. Stir into the veg mixture, then bring back to a simmer and cook until the liquid thickens enough to lightly coat the back of a spoon. Stir through the parsley and season lightly. Transfer to a large pie dish. Roughly scrunch the filo sheets and place over the filling, trying to keep them raised off the filling as far as possible, then spray with the cooking spray. Place the pie dish on a baking tray and bake for 20-25 minutes. When the pie has 10 minutes to go, boil the potatoes until tender. Mash and season lightly and stir through the yogurt. Leave the pie to stand for 5 minutes, then divide equally between 4 plates, discarding the rosemary.

CHICKEN & BACON CASSEROLE

Ready in 1 hour 40 minutes

- **4 baking potatoes, pricked**
- **Low-calorie cooking spray**
- **6 back bacon medallions, all visible fat removed, chopped into small pieces**
- **600g skinless and boneless chicken thighs, all visible fat removed, chopped into thirds**
- **500g leeks, rinsed and sliced into thin rings**
- **1 large garlic clove, crushed**
- **500ml chicken stock**
- **20g fresh tarragon, leaves picked**
- **1 level tbsp cornflour**
- **100ml skimmed milk**
- **250g thin-stemmed broccoli, to serve**
- **Juice of ½ lemon, to taste**

Preheat your oven to 200°C/ fan 180°C/ gas 6. Bake the potatoes until cooked

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through. When the potatoes have been cooking for 30 minutes, spray a large casserole dish with the cooking spray and put over a medium-high heat. Once hot, fry the bacon for 3-4 minutes until coloured, stirring often. Remove from the dish and set aside. Lightly spray the dish with the cooking spray, then fry the chicken on one side for 2 minutes. Flip and cook on the other side for 2 minutes. Remove and set aside. Spray the dish with a little more cooking spray and fry the leeks over a medium heat for 5-6 minutes, stirring often. Add the garlic with a splash of water and fry for 1 minute. Add the chicken, stock, two-thirds of the tarragon and the bacon. Bring to a simmer, then cover and cook in the oven for 40 minutes. Meanwhile, mix the cornflour and milk to make a smooth paste, and finely chop the rest of the tarragon. Transfer the casserole to the hob over a medium heat. Uncover, bring to a simmer and stir in the cornflour paste. Simmer until the sauce has thickened slightly. While it's simmering, boil the broccoli for 2-3 minutes, then drain. Stir the chopped tarragon through the casserole with a twist of black pepper and the lemon juice to taste. Equally divide between 4 bowls and serve with the potatoes and broccoli.

STROGANOFF MEATBALL TAGLIATELLE

Ready in 35 minutes

- **500g lean pork mince (5% fat or less)**
- **1 onion, very finely chopped or grated**
- **1 tsp sweet smoked paprika**
- **¼ tsp ground nutmeg**
- **15g fresh chives, finely chopped, plus extra to serve**
- **1 medium egg**
- **Low-calorie cooking spray**
- **400g dried tagliatelle**
- **200g button mushrooms, sliced**
- **1 garlic clove, crushed**
- **250ml chicken stock, made with ½ stock cube**
- **200g thin-stemmed broccoli, halved widthways**
- **4 tbsp fat-free natural fromage frais, at room temperature**
- **Mixed salad, to serve**

Place the mince, onion, paprika, nutmeg, chives and egg in a bowl, and lightly season. Mix and shape into 20 meatballs. Spray a large frying pan with the cooking spray and put over a medium-high heat. Fry the meatballs for 2-3 minutes until browned all over (you can do this in batches, if you need to). Pop on a plate and set aside. Cook the tagliatelle following the pack instructions, then drain. While it's cooking, wipe out the frying pan and spray with the cooking spray. Put back over a medium-high heat and fry the mushrooms for 2-3 minutes. Add the garlic with a splash of water and fry for 1 minute. Add the stock, bring to the boil and bubble for 2 minutes. Tip in the meatballs, put on the lid and simmer gently for 5 minutes. Add the broccoli and cook for 2-3 minutes. Remove the pan from the heat and stir in the fromage frais. Toss the tagliatelle through the meatballs and sauce, then divide between 4 plates or bowls. Scatter over the extra chives and serve with the salad.

BATTERED FISH, CHIPS & PEAS WITH TARTARE SAUCE

Ready in 50 minutes

- **800g floury potatoes, peeled and cut into chunky chips**
- **Low-calorie cooking spray**
- **4 thick skinless and boneless cod or haddock fillets**
- **2 medium eggs, separated**
- **800g frozen garden peas**
- **Lemon wedges, to serve**
- **Salad, to serve**

For the tartare sauce:

- **4 tbsp pickled gherkins, roughly chopped**
- **1 small red onion, finely chopped**
- **1 tbsp capers, drained and rinsed**
- **2 level tbsp extra-light mayonnaise**
- **200g fat-free natural fromage frais**
- **Zest of 1 lemon**
- **15g fresh dill, finely chopped**

Preheat your oven to 200°C/fan 180°C/gas 6. Spread the chips on a large, non-stick baking tray in a single layer and spray with the cooking spray. Season lightly and bake for 40 minutes, turning halfway. Once the chips are in the oven, mix the tartare sauce ingredients and set aside. Now line a baking tray with baking paper, put the fish fillets on top and season lightly. When the chips have been cooking for 25-30 minutes, using a hand whisk, whisk the egg whites in a large, clean, glass bowl until you get soft peaks. In a separate bowl, lightly whisk the egg yolks, then whisk in the egg whites and a pinch of salt. Divide the batter over the fish fillets, gently spreading it over the tops. Put the fish in the oven for the last 10-12 minutes of the chips' cooking time, or until the batter is lightly golden and the fish is cooked through. When the fish and chips are nearly ready, boil the peas for 2-3 minutes. Drain, then roughly crush with a potato masher or fork. Divide the fish, chips and peas between 4 plates. Serve with a quarter of the tartare sauce per person and the lemon wedges.

VEGGIE LENTIL CHILLI WITH RICE

Ready in 40 minutes

- **Low-calorie cooking spray**
- **1 onion, finely chopped**
- **2 garlic cloves, crushed**
- **250g flat mushrooms, roughly chopped**
- **2 red peppers, deseeded and finely chopped**
- **1 tbsp ground cumin**
- **¼ tsp ground cinnamon**
- **¼ tsp chilli powder**
- **2 tbsp tomato purée**
- **250g dried brown or green lentils**
- **400g can red kidney beans, drained and rinsed**
- **250g dried long-grain rice**
- **25g fresh coriander, leaves roughly chopped, reserving some to serve**
- **4 tbsp fat-free natural yogurt, to serve**

NB. If you are pregnant, breastfeeding, under 18 or have a medical condition please seek professional advice before changing your diet.

Spray a large frying pan with the cooking spray and place over a medium heat. Add the onion and fry until slightly softened. Add the garlic and mushrooms, and fry for 2 minutes, stirring frequently. Add the peppers, spices and tomato purée with a splash of water and fry for a further 2 minutes. Add the lentils with 500ml water. Bring to a simmer, then cook until the lentils are tender, stirring occasionally and adding the kidney beans halfway through (add a little more boiling water if the chilli starts to get dry). When the chilli has been cooking for 10-15 minutes, cook the rice according to the pack instructions, then drain well. Stir the coriander through the chilli and lightly season. Divide the rice and chilli between 4 bowls and drizzle over a little yogurt. Scatter over the reserved coriander and top with freshly ground black pepper to serve.

Snacks

Choose up to 2 a day

- 1 level tbsp peanut butter with apple slices
- 1 mini croissant
- 100g reduced-fat rice pudding
- 25g jelly beans
- 25g salted pretzels
- 1 reduced-fat garlic bread slice
- 16g bag cheese curls
- 1 x shortbread finger biscuit
- 125ml sparkling wine
- ½ pint light or pale ale

JOIN A GROUP FOR FREE AND SAVE £5

Eat real food, get real support and see real results that last. Lose weight with these exclusive Slimming World offers for *Bella* readers

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Please complete this voucher and give or send it to your Slimming World Consultant when you join a group.
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Your name ....
Consultant code .... Group code ....

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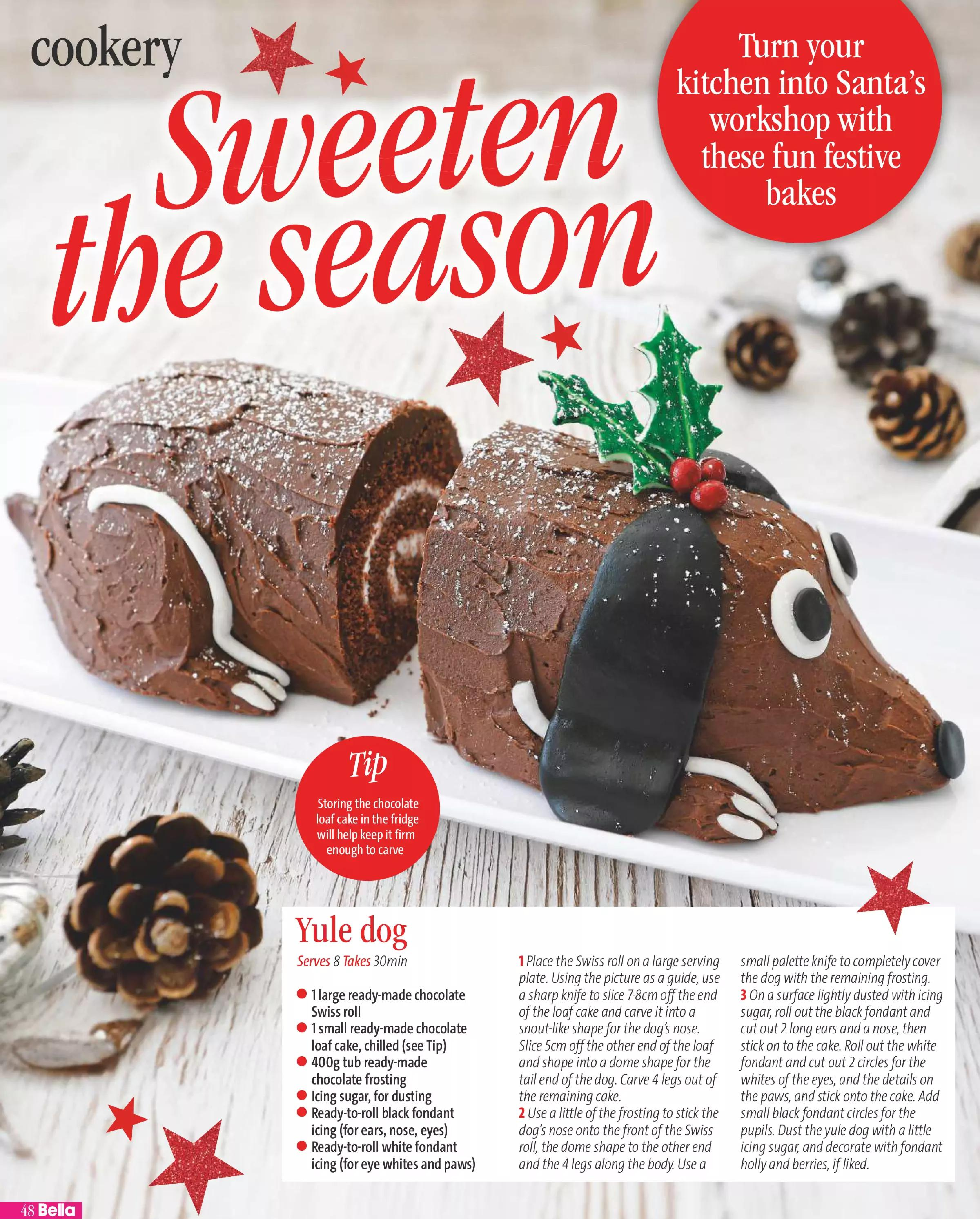
†Standard membership fee is £5/€9 and weekly group fee is £5.95/€10. All prices shown are recommended retail prices. At participating groups. See slimmingworld.co.uk for more information. Visit slimmingworld.co.uk/bella-terms for T&Cs

*Remember that you can find you'll find more delicious recipe ideas, top tips and inspirational stories at slimmingworld.co.uk or slimmingworld.ie Reviewed by Slimming World's team of Registered Nutritionists and Dietitians,©Slimming World 2025 'Slimming World' is a trademark of Miles-Bramwell Executive Services operating as Slimming World.*Slimming World recommends a safe and steady weight loss of one to two pounds per week, but you may lose more in your first weeks. **Pregnant women, the elderly, babies and toddlers are advised to choose eggs showing the British Lion stamp if eating raw or partially cooked eggs*

By Carly Honeyfield, **Pictures** Slimming World/Mowie Kay, Gareth Morgans, Andy Warburton, Toby Scott, Sam Folan, Kate Whittaker, Maja Smend

Sweeten the season

Turn your kitchen into Santa's workshop with these fun festive bakes



Tip

Storing the chocolate loaf cake in the fridge will help keep it firm enough to carve

Yule dog

Serves *8* *Takes* *30min*

- 1 large ready-made chocolate Swiss roll
- 1 small ready-made chocolate loaf cake, chilled (see Tip)
- 400g tub ready-made chocolate frosting
- Icing sugar, for dusting
- Ready-to-roll black fondant icing (for ears, nose, eyes)
- Ready-to-roll white fondant icing (for eye whites and paws)

1 *Place the Swiss roll on a large serving plate. Using the picture as a guide, use a sharp knife to slice 7-8cm off the end of the loaf cake and carve it into a snout-like shape for the dog's nose. Slice 5cm off the other end of the loaf and shape into a dome shape for the tail end of the dog. Carve 4 legs out of the remaining cake.*

2 *Use a little of the frosting to stick the dog's nose onto the front of the Swiss roll, the dome shape to the other end and the 4 legs along the body. Use a small palette knife to completely cover the dog with the remaining frosting.*

3 *On a surface lightly dusted with icing sugar, roll out the black fondant and cut out 2 long ears and a nose, then stick on to the cake. Roll out the white fondant and cut out 2 circles for the whites of the eyes, and the details on the paws, and stick onto the cake. Add small black fondant circles for the pupils. Dust the yule dog with a little icing sugar, and decorate with fondant holly and berries, if liked.*

Gingerbread layer cake

Serves *8-12* *Takes* *1hr 10min, plus cooling*

- **300g butter, softened, plus extra for greasing**
- **300g light soft brown sugar**
- **300g golden syrup**
- **300g black treacle**
- **600g self-raising flour**
- **4tsp ground ginger**
- **3 large eggs**
- **400ml milk**
- **12 ready-made gingerbread people**

FOR THE BUTTERCREAM

- **500g butter, softened**
- **1kg icing sugar**
- **1tsp ground ginger**
- **60g Carnation Caramel**

1 *Preheat the oven to 180°C/fan 160°C. Grease and line the base of 3 x 20cm round cake tins.*

2 *Heat the butter, sugar, syrup and treacle together in a saucepan over a medium heat, stirring until smooth. Sift the flour and ginger into a large bowl. Pour in the butter mixture and beat until combined. Add the eggs and milk and beat until well mixed.*

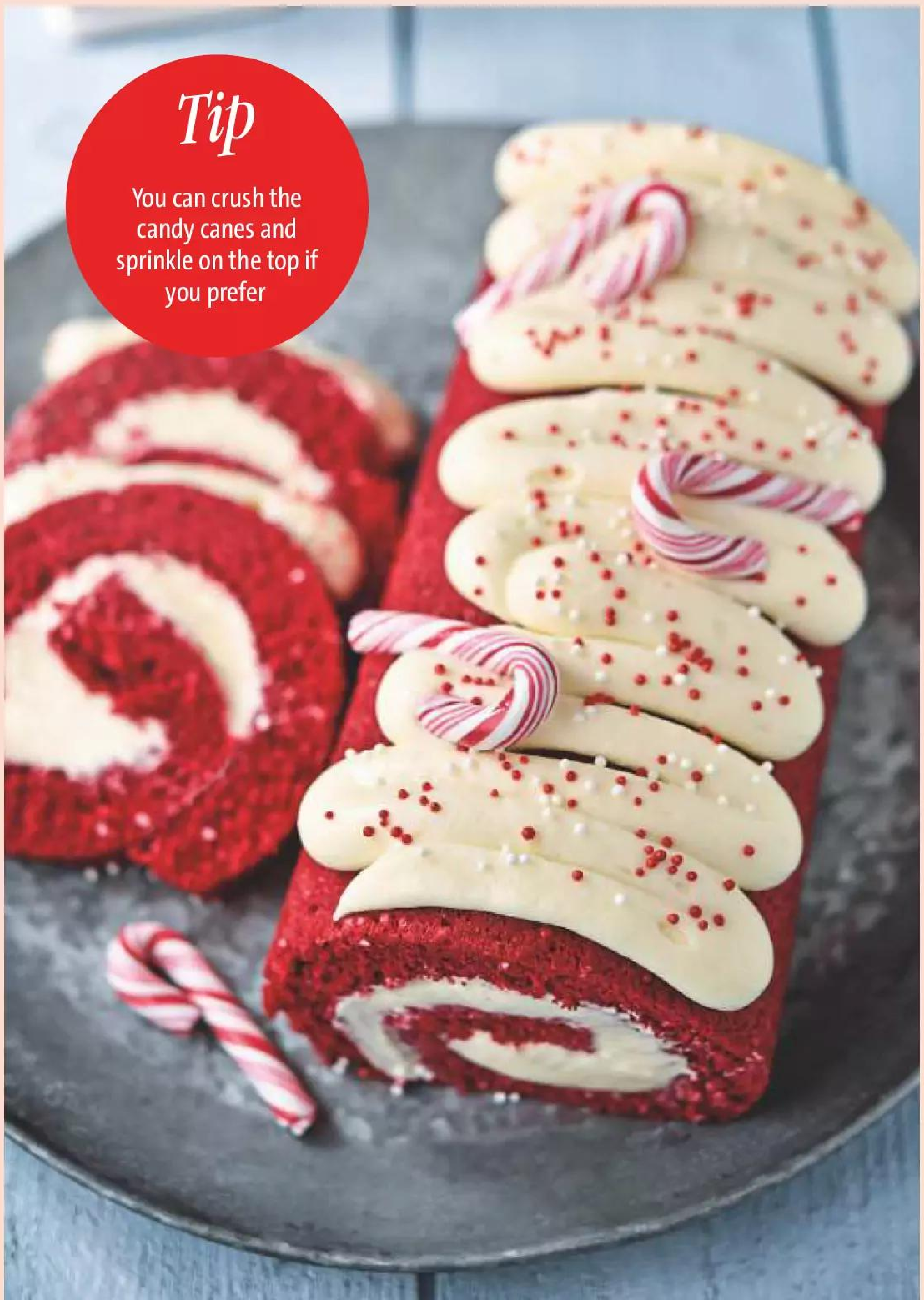
3 *Divide the mixture between the tins and bake for 35-40min until a skewer inserted in the middle comes out clean. Leave to cool in the tins for 10min, then turn out on a wire rack to cool completely.*

4 *Meanwhile, for the buttercream, using an electric mixer, beat the butter in a bowl for 4-5min until fluffy. Add the icing sugar, a little at a time, mixing constantly until the mixture is light and fluffy. Add the ginger and caramel and beat until combined.*

5 *Put one cake upside down on a serving plate or board. Spread or pipe one-third of the buttercream over the top. Top with a second cake, upside down, then spread with a further one-third of the buttercream. Top with the remaining cake and spread the remaining buttercream over the top and sides. Using the picture as a guide, stick the gingerbread people around the cake. Decorate with fresh rosemary sprigs and redcurrants or cranberries, if liked. Serve.*

Tip

We used Carnation Caramel – it's thicker than other caramel sauces, so blends into the buttercream really well. From supermarkets. RRP £1.90 for 397g can



Tip

You can crush the candy canes and sprinkle on the top if you prefer

Red velvet candy cane roll

Serves *8* *Takes* *1hr 5min, plus cooling and chilling*

- **2tbsp vegetable oil, plus extra for greasing**
- **4 eggs**
- **100g caster sugar, plus extra for sprinkling**
- **2tbsp buttermilk, or use natural Greek-style yogurt with a squeeze of lemon juice**
- **1tbsp red food colouring gel**
- **1/2tsp white wine vinegar**
- **115g self-raising flour**
- **Candy canes and coloured sprinkles, to decorate**

SOFT CHEESE BUTTERCREAM

- **150g butter, softened**
- **200g icing sugar**
- **200g full fat soft cheese, at room temperature**
- **2tbsp buttermilk**

1 *Preheat the oven to 180°C/fan 160°C. Lightly grease a 23cm x 33cm Swiss roll tin or baking tray and line with baking paper.*

2 *Using an electric mixer, beat the eggs and sugar together in a bowl for 10min, or until very thick and pale and the beaters leave a trail in the mixture.*

3 *Whisk the buttermilk, food colouring and vinegar together in a jug. Add to the egg mixture and whisk until combined. Sift over the flour, then fold in gently. Pour the mixture into the tin, spreading it out evenly. Bake for 15min or until risen and springy.*

4 *Sprinkle a large sheet of baking paper with caster sugar. Turn the sponge out onto the paper and leave to cool for 5min, then peel away the paper from the top. Score a line 2cm from one of the shorter ends and roll up the sponge, with the paper inside. Leave to cool.*

5 *Meanwhile, using an electric mixer, beat the butter in a bowl for 4-5min until fluffy. Add the icing sugar, a little at a time, mixing constantly until the mixture is fluffy. Beat in the soft cheese and buttermilk until smooth.*

6 *Unroll the sponge and spread half of the buttercream over the sponge, leaving a 4cm gap at the short end. Re-roll from the scored short end, and finish with the seam underneath. Pipe or spread the remaining buttercream over the top of the cake, and decorate with colourful sprinkles and candy canes. Chill for 30min-1hr until firm. Serve.*

By Hayley Merrick **Pictures** Stockfood Timings are approximate

High days & holidays!

Bring some sparkle to your Sunday lunch with these showstoppers from Rick Stein

Tip

Some ham can be quite salty. Cut a sliver from the joint and simmer it for about 5min. Taste, and if it's too salty, soak the joint for 8hr or overnight in cold water, then continue with Step 1

Glazed ham

Serves 10–15 Takes 3hr 30min, plus cooling and resting (plus possible overnight soaking – see Tip)

- **1 bone-in gammon joint, about 3.5kg in weight (see Tip)**
- **1ltr cider**
- **2tsp black peppercorns**
- **2 cloves**
- **½tsp chilli flakes**
- **4 bay leaves**

FOR THE GLAZE

- **25 whole cloves**
- **2–3tbsp English mustard**
- **80g brown soft sugar**

1 *Put the gammon in a large stock pot and add the cider and enough water to cover. Add the peppercorns, cloves, chilli flakes and bay leaves and bring to the boil. Immediately turn the heat down to a simmer, then skim and discard any scum that rises to the surface. Cook for 2hr 40min. At the end of this time, the internal temperature of the joint should be 63–65°C when checked with a meat probe in the thickest part.*

2 *Remove the gammon from the liquid and reserve the strained stock for making soup or boulangère potatoes or to add to a parsley sauce.*

3 *Allow the joint to cool enough for you to neatly remove the tough skin, leaving a layer of fat over the whole joint. Using a sharp knife, score a diamond pattern over the fat, then stud the meat with cloves at the intersections of the diamonds.*

4 *Preheat the oven to 210°C/fan 190°C. Sit the ham on a trivet or wire rack in a roasting tin and pour in 120ml of water to prevent the sugar and fat burning. Mix the glaze ingredients together and brush some over the ham, then place it in a hot oven for 15min. Take the ham out and glaze a second time, then put it back in the oven for a further 10–15 min until golden brown but not burnt. Remove and leave the ham to rest for 15min. Carve and serve warm with red cabbage, colcannon mash and parsley sauce. Or leave to cool and serve with pickles and chutneys as part of a buffet.*

Winter vegetable crumble

Serves 4-6 Takes 1hr 15–1hr 30min

- 40g butter or oil
- 1 large onion, halved and sliced
- 2 garlic cloves, chopped
- 300g carrots, cut into rounds about 1cm thick
- About 600g celeriac, peeled and cut into 3cm chunks
- 20g plain flour
- 175ml red wine
- 2 tomatoes, chopped
- 1tbsp tomato purée
- 550ml vegetable stock
- 100g chestnut mushrooms, quartered
- 100g vacuum-packed chestnuts, halved
- 400g tin of borlotti beans, drained
- Chopped rosemary or thyme leaves
- 1 bay leaf
- Handful of flatleaf parsley, chopped
- Salt and lots of black pepper

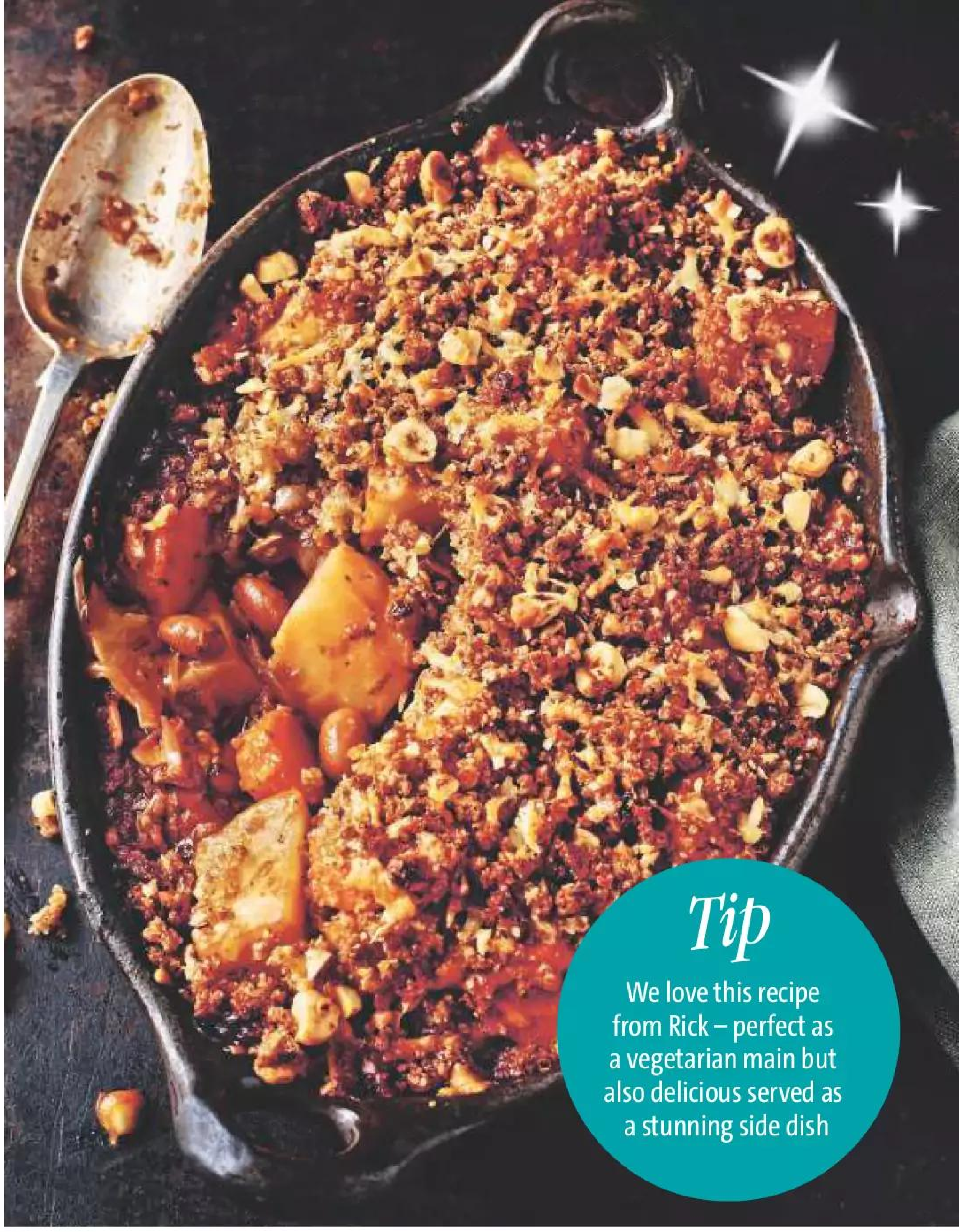
FOR THE CRUMBLE TOPPING

- 250g rye bread
- 25g melted butter
- 30g hazelnuts, chopped
- 125g hard sheep cheese, such as Manchego or Pecorino, or hard goat's cheese, grated (or vegetarian hard cheese)

1 *For the filling, heat the butter or oil in a large pan and add the onion, garlic, carrots and celeriac. Fry them gently for 10–15min until softened, then add the flour and stir to mix well.*

2 *Add the red wine, tomatoes, tomato purée and stock, then bring to the boil and allow to bubble and thicken for 5–10min. Add the mushrooms, chestnuts, borlotti beans and herbs, season with salt and pepper to taste and cook for about 10min. Tip into a large pie dish or 4–6 individual ones. Preheat the oven to 190°C/fan 170°C.*

3 *In a food processor, blitz the rye bread to coarse crumbs. Tip into a bowl and stir in the melted butter, hazelnuts and grated cheese, then season with salt and lots of coarsely ground black pepper. Spread the topping over the vegetable mixture in the dish/dishes. Bake for 25–30min until hot and bubbling and golden on top. Serve with a green salad, green beans or leafy vegetables.*



Tip

We love this recipe from Rick – perfect as a vegetarian main but also delicious served as a stunning side dish

Tip

This is a great dessert worth considering as a lighter alternative to Christmas pudding

Apple & mincemeat strudel

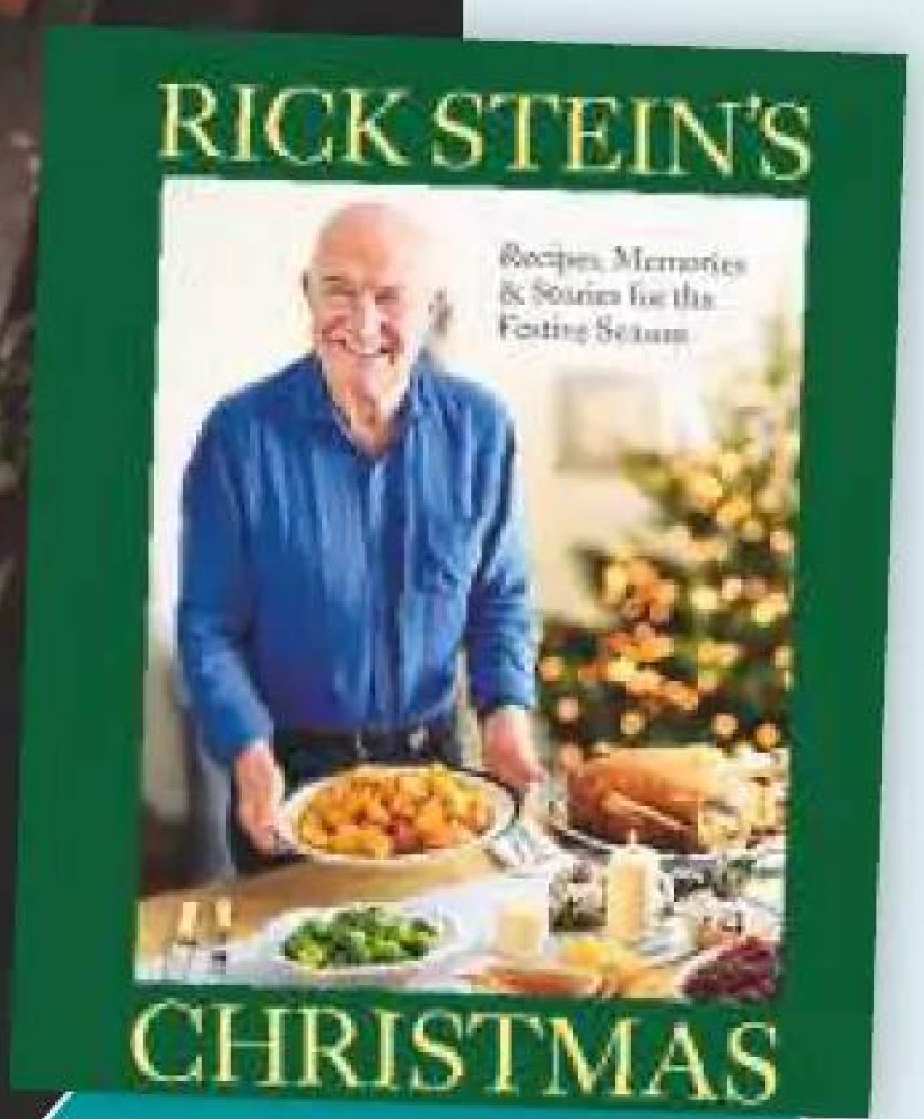
Serves 4-6 Takes 1hr 10min–1hr 15min, plus cooling

- 550g Bramley apples, peeled, cored, quartered and sliced
- 1½tsp ground cinnamon
- Zest of ½ lemon
- 2tsp lemon juice
- 100g caster sugar definitely
- 95g butter
- 45g dried white/panko breadcrumbs
- 225g mincemeat (shop bought is fine)
- 6 large sheets of filo pastry (45 x 25cm)
- 2tbsp flaked almonds, toasted
- 1tbsp icing sugar, for dusting

1 *Mix the apples with the cinnamon, lemon zest and juice and sugar. Melt 20g of the butter in a small frying pan and fry the breadcrumbs until golden. Add them to the apples, then stir in the mincemeat. Preheat the oven to 180°C/fan 160°C. Line a baking sheet with baking paper.*

2 *Melt the rest of the butter in a pan. Place a clean tea towel on the worktop with the long edge towards you. Place a sheet of the filo on top and brush with some of the melted butter. Lay another sheet over it and brush with butter, then repeat until you have used all the filo. Pile the filling on to the filo, leaving a border of about 3cm all round. Tuck the ends of the filo in and then, using the tea towel to help, roll the pastry away from you to enclose all the filling.*

3 *Transfer the roll, seam-side down, to the lined baking sheet and brush with the rest of the melted butter. Bake for 40–45min until golden. Toast the almonds in a dry pan until golden. Allow the strudel to cool to room temperature, then dust with icing sugar and scatter over the toasted almonds. Slice and serve with cream, ice cream or custard, if liked.*



These recipes are taken from ***Rick Stein's Christmas* by Rick Stein** (BBC Books, £28)

By Angela Romeo. **Recipes** Rick Stein. **Pictures** James Murphy

Let the festivit

Centrepieces

Winner

This Specially Selected Crackling Gammon Joint is so delicious, we wouldn't miss the turkey for a second. The sugar-baked delight was around last year, but we think it has even more crackling in 2025 for your buck. Great for the main event, and any leftovers on Boxing Day. **Aldi, £19.99 for 2.5kg**

Runner-up

The Best Signature Tree Bone Steak is so juicy and tender, we're still dreaming about it! A thick-cut 14-day matured T-bone with a chimichurri rub and rosemary and thyme butter, it's perfect served with roasties and veg. Ideal for two greedy (or four not-so greedy) people! **Morrisons, £31.50 per kg**

Highly Recommended

We didn't want to choose two beef centrepieces, but we couldn't leave this Slow Cooked British Beef Shin with Bone Marrow out, as it's too delicious. Tender, with a rich buttery marrow, we enjoyed this with mash rather than roasties, so if you prefer a more relaxed, non-traditional Christmas lunch, then this is for you. **Waitrose, £22 for 1.4kg**

ies begin

We've eaten and sipped our way through this year's supermarket Christmas food and here are our faves

The best fizz

Winner

This fizz goes down very easily! It's not too dry or too sweet, making it a wonderfully versatile sparkling wine. Delicate bubbles are guaranteed to get the party started... and keep it going throughout the night. A great price for a quality product. **Morrisons The Best Prosecco Valdobbiadene, £9.50 for 75cl**

Runner-up

This fizz has an extremely refreshing appley flavour; light enough to enjoy on Christmas morning. Available in a regular-sized bottle and a smaller 37.5cl – ideal for popping into a little gift bag with chocs or socks! **Asda Exceptional Prosecco Brut, £4.48 for 37.5cl or £7.52 for 75cl**

Alternative to prosecco

Very quaffable! We gave this French sparkler a whirl and were impressed – it's fresh and fizzy with peachy, apricot flavours and a zingy kick. It feels posh without the Champagne price tag – and we reckon it's just the thing to pop open on Christmas morning with a plate of smoked salmon. **M&S Classics No.12 Crémant de Bourgogne, £12 for 75cl**

Continued over the page...

Fish & seafood

Winner

Specially Selected Smoked Salmon Rolled Terrines, including beetroot and orange, and lemon and herb soft cheeses wrapped in an oak-smoked salmon. Perfect for Christmas starters, or slice and pop onto a round of cucumber for a bite-sized party snack. **Aldi, £3.99 for 120g**

Runner-up

We've tasted a few of these fish and chip-type party food nibbles this year, but we kept going back to this one as they didn't fall apart when we ate them, and we loved that the fish was coated in a salt and vinegar batter, which made them very moreish. Pop them in the freezer and you're party ready. **Asda Party Mini Fish & Chip Sliders, £2.48 for 200g**

Best Smoked Salmon

Golden orange and silky smooth, this budget-friendly salmon looks far more luxe than its price. The flavour is spot on – smoky and slightly sweet, and every buttery bite feels like a treat. It's a dream with a glass of fizz. **Lidl Deluxe Strong & Robust Smoked Scottish Salmon, £2.99 for 100g**

Deluxe
STRONG & ROBUST
SMOKED
SCOTTISH SALMON
RESPONSIBLY SOURCED
READY TO EAT
100g

Wow desserts

Winner

Not only does this Specially Selected Hazel Nut-Cracker taste immense, but the price is astonishing for what you get compared to some others. A gold-dusted Belgian chocolate shell filled with caramel sauce, digestive biscuit balls, mini marshmallows, and a hazelnut and milk chocolate ganache, it'll give a real 'ooh' moment after the roast. **Aldi, £7.99 for 400g**

If you're looking for a lighter pudding to follow the big dinner, this Festive Berry Panna Cotta Snowflake is the perfect choice. Topped with a winter berry sauce, we really loved this creamy vanilla-flavoured dessert. It melts in the mouth and is pretty as a picture on the table. **Tesco Food to Order at Tesco.com, £12 (£10 with Clubcard), serves 8**

Runner-up

By Hayley Merrick, Angela Romeo, Helena Holdsworth, **Pictures** PR images

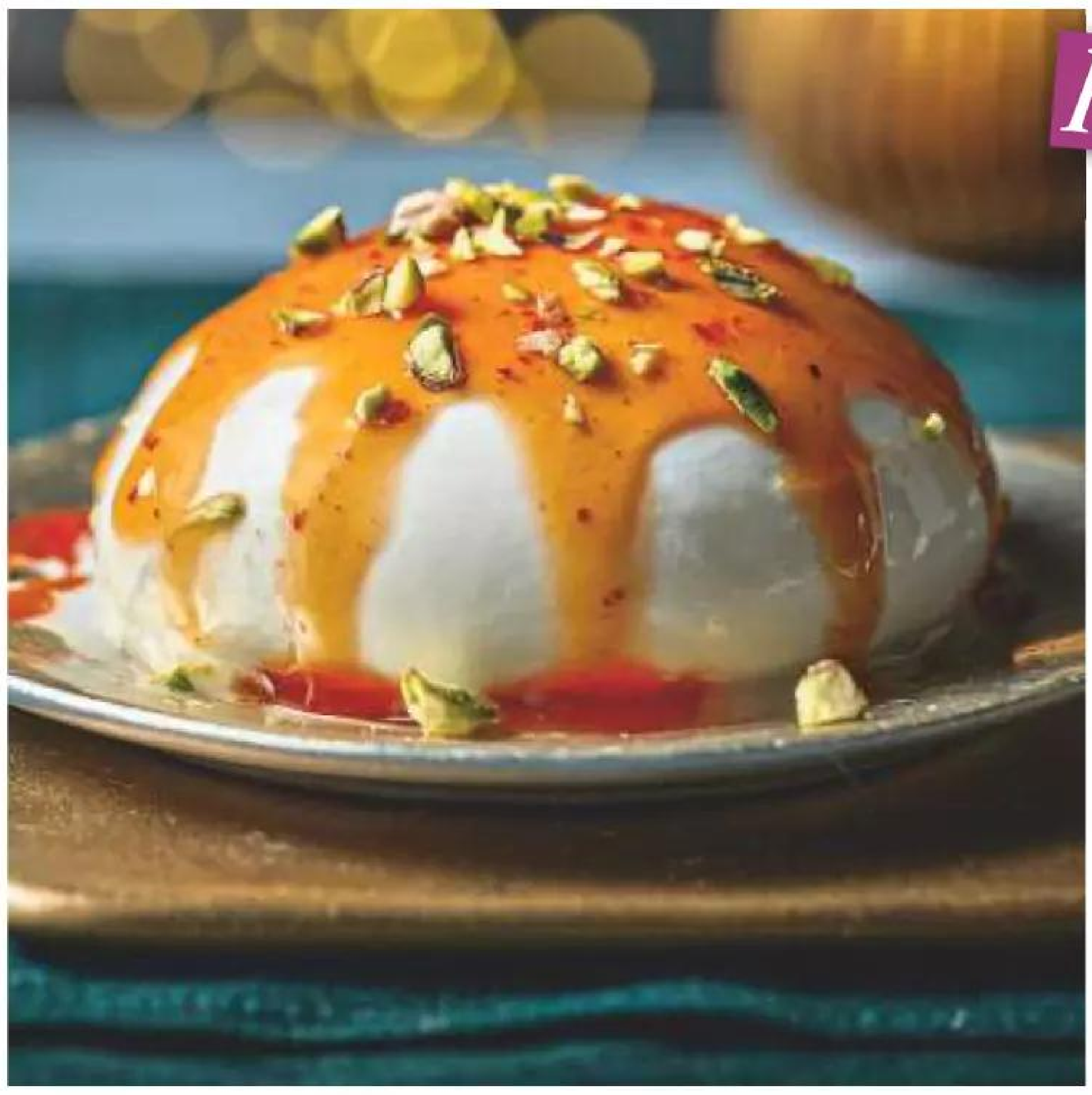
Highly Recommended

This, creamy luxurious Lemon and Mascarpone Panettone Gateau is absolutely dreamy. Soft, rich panettone layers with mascarpone cream and lemon curd, all topped with white chocolate curls. It is on the pricy side, but a little goes a long way, and is so worth the extra spend. **M&S Food to order to collect from christmasfood.marksandspencer.com, £25, serves 10**

Cheese

Winner

We loved so much of Aldi's cheese range we couldn't pick just one product, so we're giving the whole caboodle our top spot! The value for money is second to none. We loved the Hickory Smoked Vintage Cheddar (**£2.49 for 200g**), in particular, and the Ultimate Cheese Selection Pack is just **£12.99 for 625g**. You can't go wrong!



Runner-up

Once kept for 'special occasions', burrata has now become an everyday staple. And with maple and pistachios being major trends this year, this fresh, creamy sharing Burrata with Hot Maple Glaze and Pistachios will make an impressive centrepiece at any festive gathering – it is oh so delicious. **Tesco, £6**

Highly Recommended

This Christmas Cheese & Garlic Doughball Tree consists of soft doughballs topped with Cheddar, mozzarella and aromatic garlic, all moulded into a festive shape, that is gooey, melting and delicious. Pop on the table and everyone can tear and share! Available Nov 2025. **Morrisons, £5 for 350g**

Beat the BUGS

Supercharge your immunity and stay fit for the holiday season with these expert tips

With the party season approaching, we want to do all we can to prevent catching winter bugs. Dr Deepali Misra-Sharp, GP and British Menopause Society advanced menopause specialist, says, 'Winter is the season when coughs, colds and flu are at their peak, but there are steps we can take to strengthen our natural defences. By making small lifestyle changes, we can boost our immune system and reduce the severity of illness when it does strike.'

We spoke to three top experts to find out what they do to improve their immunity and stay well during the colder months.

Physical activity helps reduce inflammation

Eat for your gut

Around 70% of your immune system is in the gut, so looking after it is an obvious place to start when it comes to improving your overall immunity.

Immunologist Dr Jenna Macciochi, author of ***Immune To Age***, says, 'A healthy gut microbiome helps regulate the immune system, including lowering unwanted inflammation, keeping the gut barrier strong, and producing metabolites (like short-chain fatty acids) that train and support immune cells all over the body.'

A healthy gut means eating a diverse range of plants, including fruit, vegetables, herbs, spices, nuts, seeds and pulses, along with some fermented foods. Dr Jenna adds, 'Every meal I eat has my gut microbiome in mind. I aim to eat a diverse range of plants every week, which makes my gut bacteria as resilient as possible. I also make jars of sauerkraut, and I love kimchi, so I always have these in the fridge, along with kefir and yogurt for an easy daily dose of fermented foods full of live probiotics. These are also gentle on digestion.'

> 'Even a mild zinc deficiency can make you more susceptible to infections'

Nutritionist Rob Hobson adds, 'I look after my gut year-round with plenty of fermented foods and those high in fibre. I try to eat nutrient-dense meals that are packed with

Supplements can help top up your levels

vitamins, minerals, fibre and antioxidants, to keep my body well-nourished and ready to fight off colds.'

Add in vitamins

Rob says he aims to add zinc-rich foods to his diet. 'Zinc is vital for the normal development and activation of immune cells, and even a mild deficiency can make you more susceptible to infections. It's not a nutrient the body stores well, so I make a conscious effort to include zinc-rich foods every day – like pumpkin seeds sprinkled over porridge or salads, a handful of cashews as a snack, and seafood like prawns or mussels a couple of times a week. Lean meats such as chicken or turkey are also great.'

> 'Sleep is not a luxury, it's part of your immune defence'

Dr Deepali also stresses that vitamins C and D are important. 'Vitamin D acts a bit like the immune system's coach; it helps your body make and activate the cells that fight off infections. In the UK, we don't get enough sunlight between October and March to make it naturally, so adults are advised to take a daily supplement of 10 micrograms during these months.'

She adds, 'Vitamin C helps immune cells function well and protects them from damage. You can supplement, but it's easy to get from a healthy diet rich in fruit and veg like citrus fruits, berries, peppers and greens.'

Take sleep seriously

Prioritise rest if you want your immune system to function properly, says Rob. 'Sleep is one of the most powerful tools we have for supporting immunity. Even one or two nights of poor sleep can lower the activity of infection-fighting white blood cells, making it harder for the body to respond to bugs. I aim for seven-to-eight hours a night and stick to a consistent sleep-wake routine. I'm quite disciplined with my evening habits and ditch my phone and emails after 7pm, read before bed to wind down, and try to resist the temptation to binge another episode of a box set. This consistency helps regulate my circadian rhythm, which in turn supports immune function.'

Dr Deepali adds, 'Sleep is when your immune system really gets to work – during deep sleep, your body releases proteins called cytokines to help fight infections and reduce inflammation. If you're not getting enough rest, you're making it harder for your immune system to do its job. Most adults need seven-to-nine hours a night. It's not a luxury, it's part of your immune defence.'

Move daily

'Physical activity boosts circulation and has powerful anti-inflammatory effects that protect immunity as we age,' says Dr Jenna. 'I think of movement as non-negotiable, like brushing my teeth. I strength train once a week, because that's all I can fit in, but I cycle and walk when I can. I also pepper in "micro-movements" throughout the day.

Dr Deepali adds, 'Even in cold weather, I aim for at least 150 minutes a week of moderate activity to keep my immune system and cardiovascular health in check. Even a brisk 20-minute walk can help immune resilience.'

Take a breath

Finally – and this one is easy and takes only a few minutes – Dr Jenna says, 'Relaxation practices can lower stress hormones like cortisol, balance the nervous system, and reduce the chronic low-grade inflammation that can weaken immune defences.'

She turns to daily meditation to keep calm and healthy. 'I've been doing it for years, and I then trained in meditation and breath work to deepen my understanding. But I'm a busy mum, so I keep it realistic. Sometimes I'll do 10 minutes of guided meditation using an app like Calm, other times it's simply three-to-five minutes of slow nasal breathing.

'For me, the value lies in consistency, not perfection. It's less about emptying your mind, more about checking in with how you feel, and what you need. It creates mental space, which helps us make better decisions, like stopping ourselves reaching for unhealthy foods.'

OLD WIVES' TALES – BUSTED!

Dr Jenna separates the facts from the fiction when it comes to all those things you might have heard.

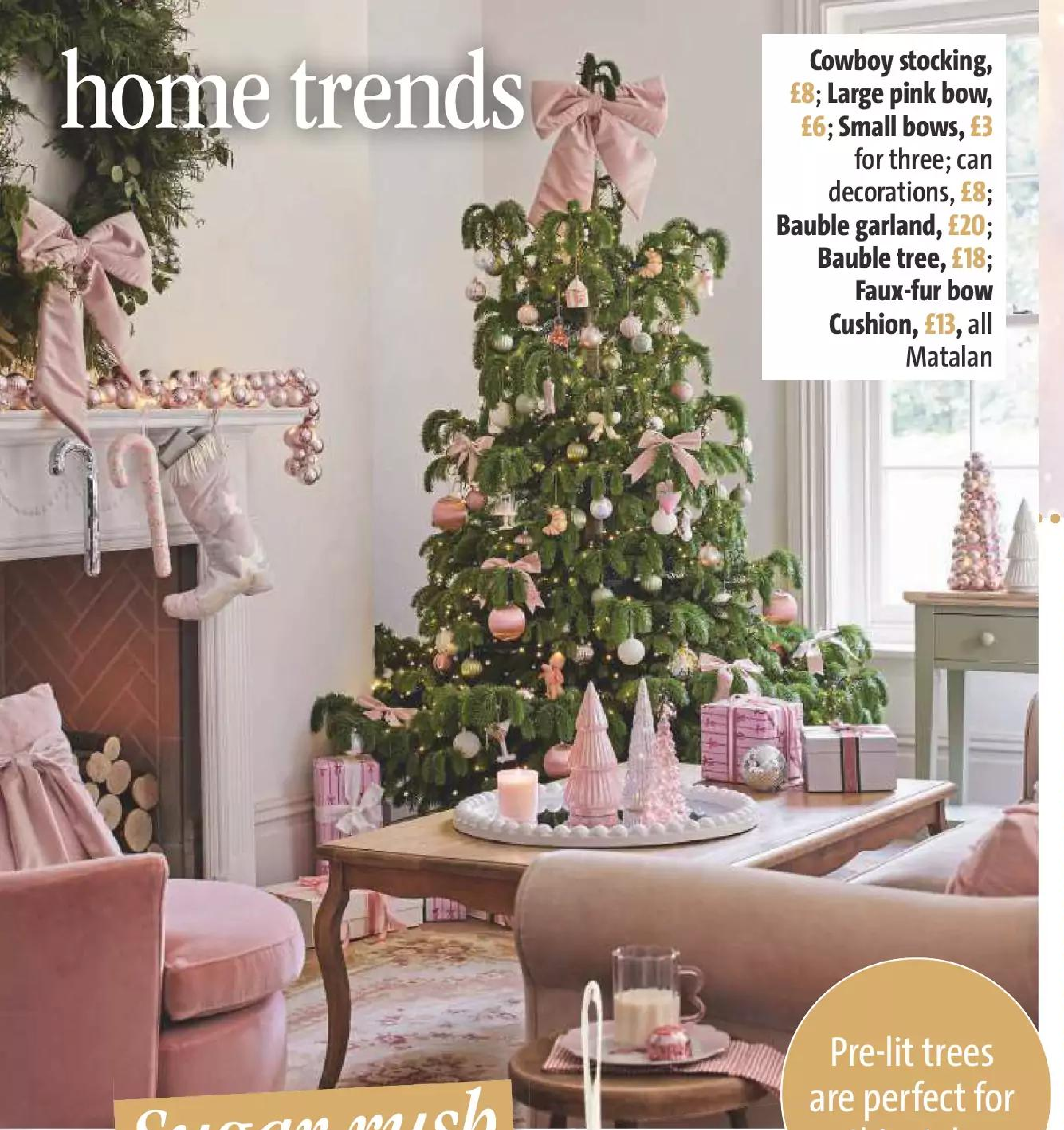
Feed a cold, starve a fever: 'This is partly a myth. You need adequate nourishment and hydration, whether you have a cold or a fever. Illness increases metabolic demands, so gentle, nourishing foods can help recovery. But in a severe bacterial infection, there is evidence that withholding food can help with severity of symptoms.'

Rub garlic on your feet to ward off bugs: 'Myth. Garlic's immune-supportive compounds need to be eaten to be effective. Your skin won't absorb them into the bloodstream in meaningful amounts, although it might be helpful for topical infections.'

Don't go out with wet hair or you'll catch a cold: 'This is a myth with a sliver of truth. Colds are caused by viruses, not the weather. But getting hypothermia – unlikely with wet hair in the UK winter – can mildly suppress immune defences in your nose and throat, making it easier for viruses to take hold if you're exposed.'

Gargling with saltwater cures a sore throat: 'Partly true. It won't cure the underlying infection, but it can soothe inflammation and help flush out irritants or microbes.'

By Annabelle Lee. **Pictures** Adobe Stock, Shutterstock



Cowboy stocking, £8; **Large pink bow,** £6; **Small bows,** £3 for three; can decorations, £8; **Bauble garland,** £20; **Bauble tree,** £18; **Faux-fur bow Cushion,** £13, all Matalan

Deck t

Sugar rush

A combo of pearlescent pink and silver is ideal for this whimsical trend. Think fairies, nutcrackers and a dusting of snow to compete the look.

Pre-lit trees are perfect for this style

Frosty glitter snow globe, Gisela Graham, £25

Pink poinsettia wreath, Homescapes Online, £22.99

Silver ice skates, Home Bargains, £1.49

Pink tree decoration, Gisela Graham, £3.99

Fairy tree topper, B&Q, £10

Pink baubles, curatedliving.co.uk, £20 for four

Traditional opulence

Keep the classic red and green, but give tradition a twist with rich textures and playful accents for a kitsch festive flair.

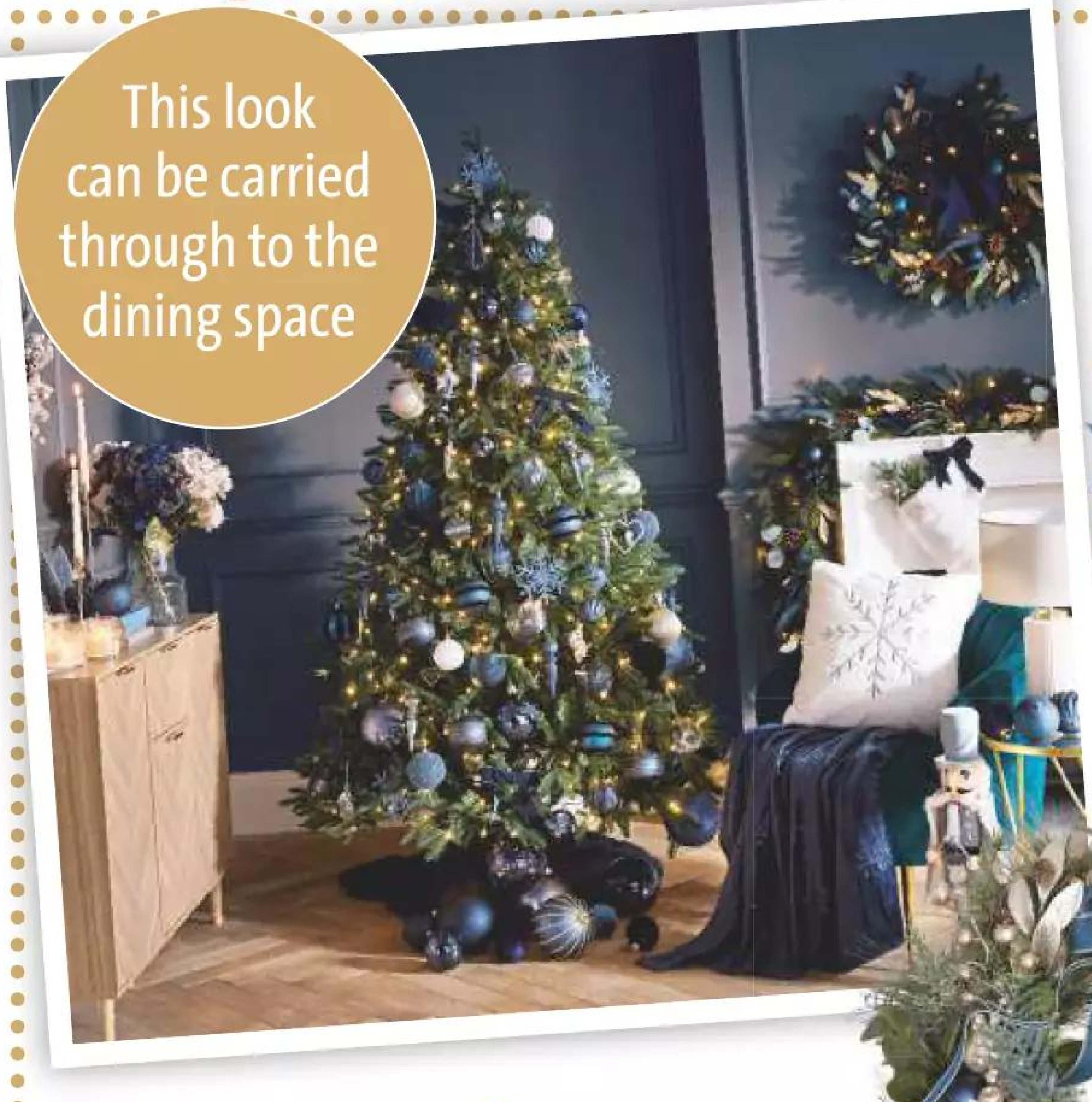
Santa cushion, George Home, £7

Wreath, Home Bargains, £12.99

Sleigh Rides and Hot Cocoa
MISTLETOE FARM

Printed crate, Matalan, £15

Glass hanging decoration, Marks & Spencer, £5



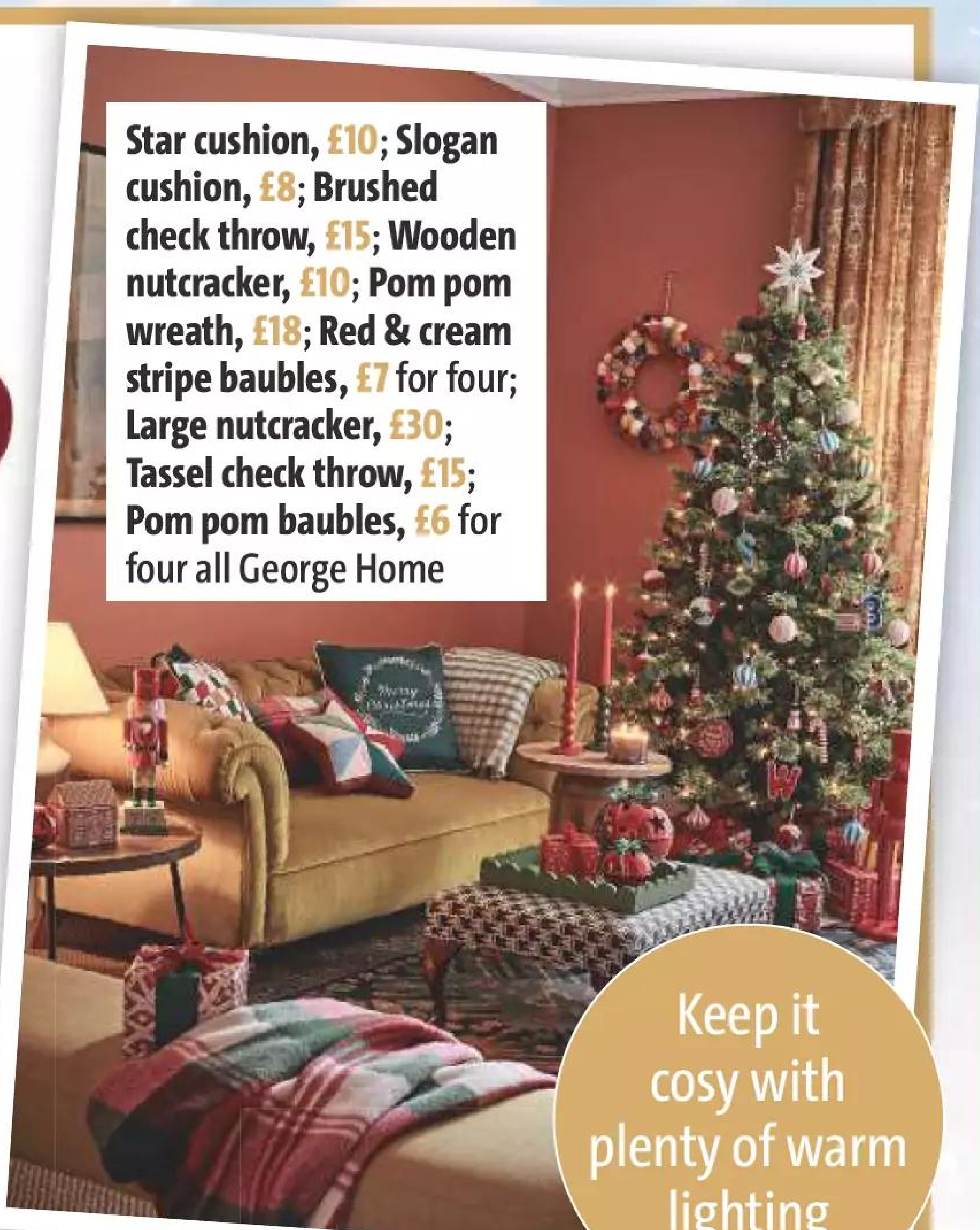
This look can be carried through to the dining space

Glitter hydrangea bunch, £8; **Midnight peacock baubles,** £3 each; **Midnight baubles,** £10 for 50; **Luxury baubles,** £4 for six; **Snowflake cushion,** £8; **throw,** £5; **Table lamp** £20; **Nutcracker,** £15, all B&M

he *balls*

Spread the sparkle and add a fresh twist to your Xmas decorations this year

Stocking, B&M, £5



Star cushion, £10; **Slogan cushion,** £8; **Brushed check throw,** £15; **Wooden nutcracker,** £10; **Pom pom wreath,** £18; **Red & cream stripe baubles,** £7 for four; **Large nutcracker,** £30; **Tassel check throw,** £15; **Pom pom baubles,** £6 for four all George Home

Keep it cosy with plenty of warm lighting

Midnight blues

Indulge in a luxe navy Christmas, with shimmering gold accents adding glamorous sparkle for an unforgettable, extra-special feel.

Gold pre-lit Christmas swag, very.co.uk, £49

Navy velvet star, Dunelm, £1

Navy and gold feather bauble, Homesense, £2.49

Velvet bows, Home Bargains, £1.49, for five

Navy wreath, Matalan, £28

Christmas tree fringed cushion, rowenhomes.com, £40

Pink party

Dial up the festive cheer with dopamine brights to flood your home with a riot of neon colour.

DECK THE HALLS
FA LALALALA
MERRY CHRISTMAS

Christmas garland set, merimeri.co.uk, £20

Nutcracker, Next Home, £20

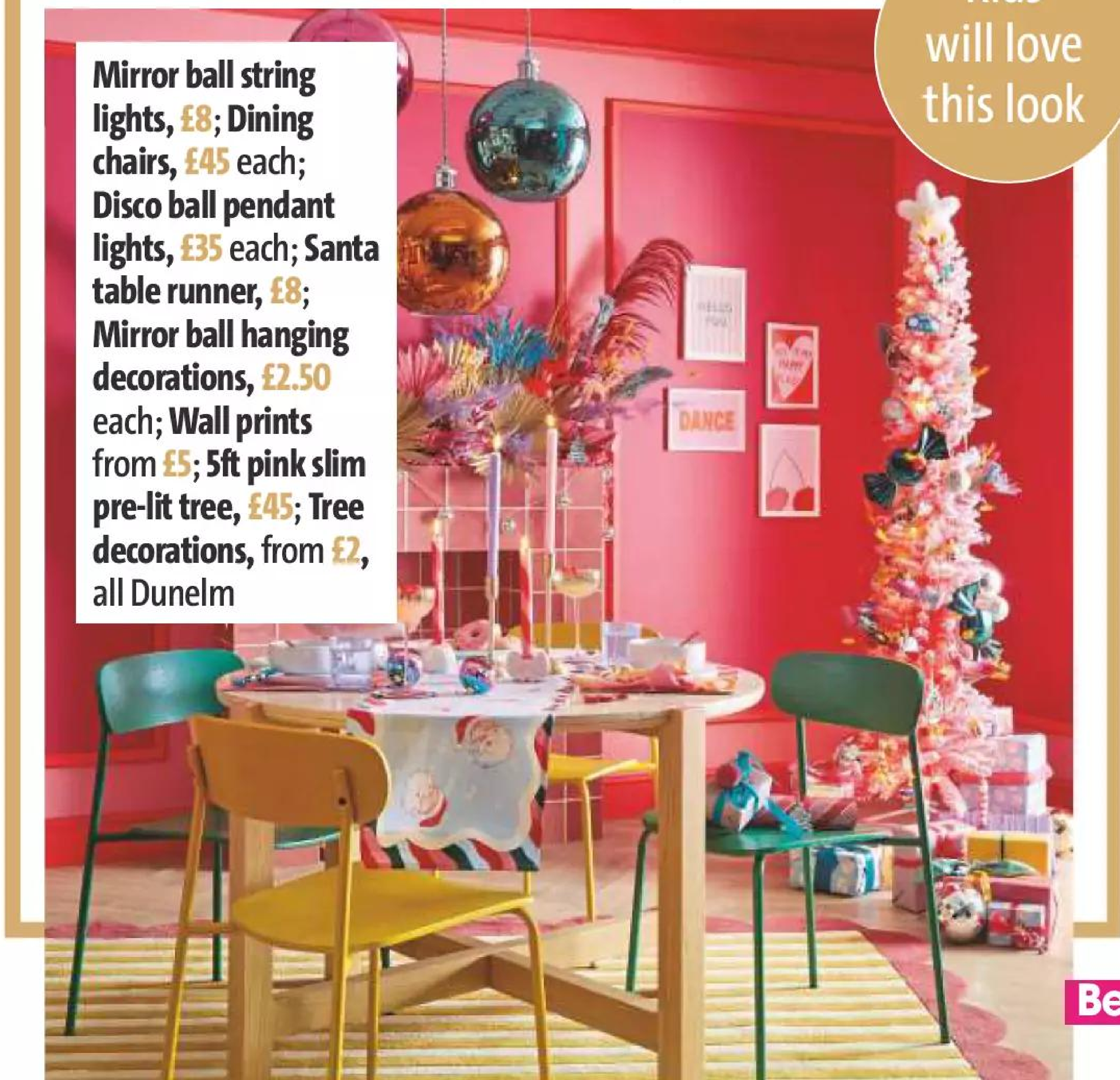
Star Hanging decoration, Rocket St George, £9.95

Flamingo decoration, Dunelm, £2.50

Colourful baubles, Homesense, £12.99

Ho Ho Ho sign, B&Q, £20

Kids will love this look



Mirror ball string lights, £8; **Dining chairs,** £45 each; **Disco ball pendant lights,** £35 each; **Santa table runner,** £8; **Mirror ball hanging decorations,** £2.50 each; **Wall prints** from £5; **5ft pink slim pre-lit tree,** £45; **Tree decorations,** from £2, all Dunelm

By Zoe Bishop

THE DARKEST CRIMES AND EVIL MINDS

CRIME MONTHLY

KILLER GRANNY PLOTS MURDER OF SON-IN-LAW

CELESTE RIVAS MYSTERY HOW DID SHE END UP DEAD IN SINGER'S CAR?

'INCEST BLOOD CULT' TEEN FORCED TO MARRY UNCLE AND HIS TWO WIVES

CRIME MONTHLY

ISSUE 81
NOV 2025

THE DARKEST CRIMES AND EVIL MINDS

BEYOND EVIL

BRUTAL MURDER

MARISSA NEARLY GOT AWAY

BOYFRIEND SLEPT WITH YOUNG MUM'S BODY FOR TEN DAYS

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Christmas hampers under £100

Order soon – these treat-packed parcels sell out quickly!

By Carly Honeyfield

Vegan Treats Hamper, M&S, **£55**

Chocolate Gift Box, cadburygiftsdirect.co.uk, **£35**

The Merry & Bright Hamper, M&S, **£75**

Taste of Italy Hamper, Lakeland, **£39.99**

Festive Afternoon Tea, Betty's, **£60**

Finest Christmas Hamper with Prosecco, Tesco, **£35**

Let it Snow Indulgent Cheese Hamper, snowdoniacheese.co.uk, **£52**

Mistletoe & Wine Hamper, Cartwright & Butler, **£95**

The Savoury Hamper, Selfridges, **£65**

TWO WINNERS

Win! A toy and games bundle worth £500!

Want to make this Christmas extra magical? We're giving two lucky *Bella* readers the chance to win a fabulous festive bundle of 21 toys and games – worth an amazing £500!

First up, the prize includes the much-loved Elf on the Shelf! You'll get not one but two official Scout Elves (a boy and a girl), plus the brilliant Ultimate Ideas Kit to spark daily magical moments in the lead up to the big day. Just imagine the festive fun these cheeky elves could get up to. Also tucked inside are the adorable Elf Mate Friends and a SnoBiggie Little Grunt Yeti – perfect for cosy Christmas cuddles.

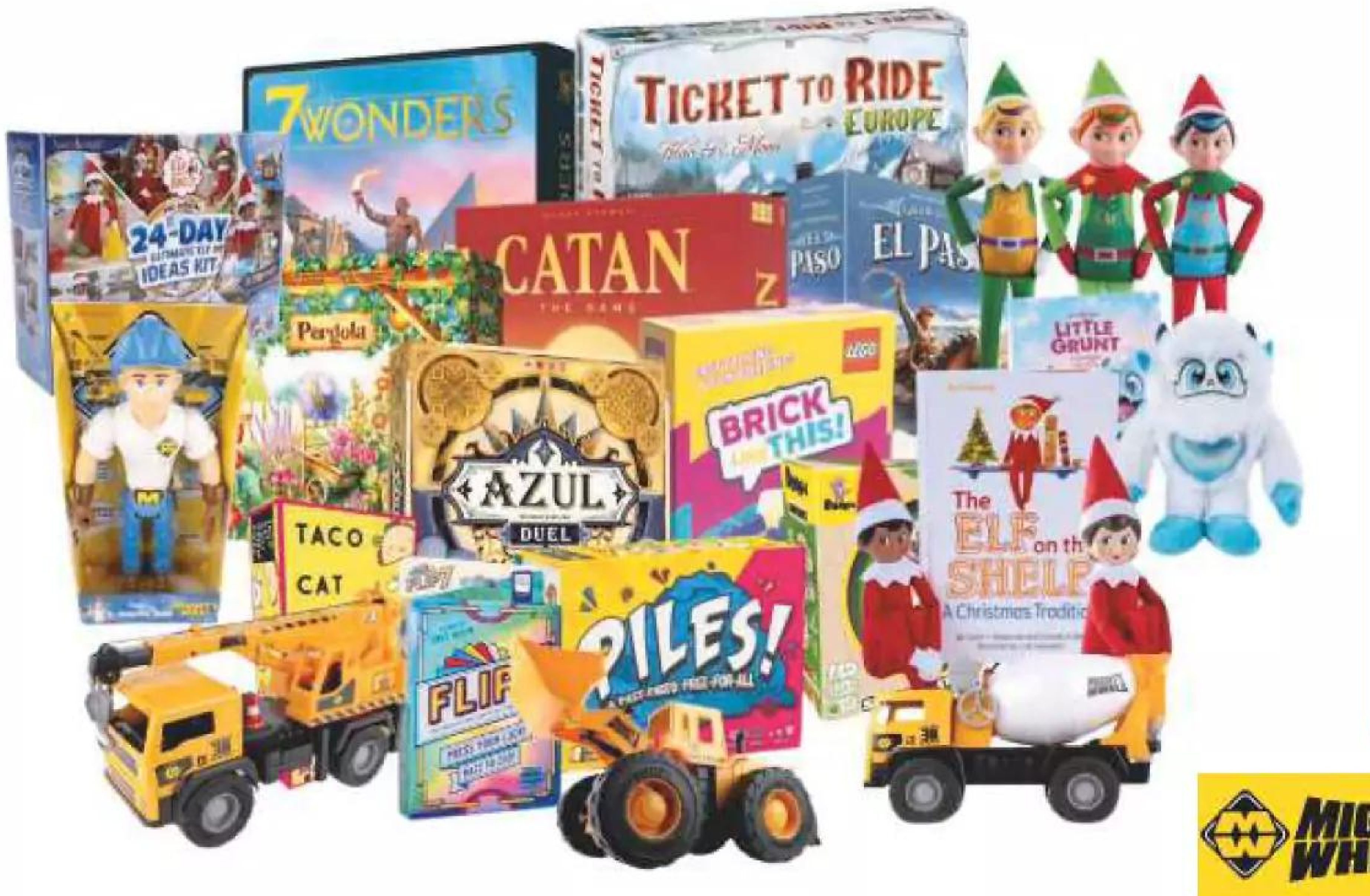
For little builders, Mighty Wheels are revving up the fun with a Cement Mixer, Front Loader, Mobile Crane and the brand-new action hero Mighty Man. These toys guarantee hours of imaginative play.

When it's time to gather loved ones around the table, there's a brilliant selection of 10 top games from asmodee, including:

Brick Like This! Piles! Azul Duel, CATAN, Ticket to Ride Europe, Dobble Dinosaurs, Taco Cat Goat Cheese Pizza, Pergola, 7 Wonders, and the Great Western Trail: El Paso.

This incredible bundle has something for everyone – so don't miss your chance to make Christmas unforgettable!

Q. How many games does this prize include?
a) 5 b) 10 c) 15



HOW TO ENTER

For your chance to win, answer the question on the left correctly, then:

- Phone 0901 133 4416 (UK, Channel Islands and Isle of Man). Calls cost 50p per call plus your network access charge. You must be over 18 and have the bill payer's permission.
- Or text BEL44 (UK, Channel Islands, and Isle of Man) then a space followed by your name, house number or house name, your postcode, then your answer, all separated by a space, to 65115 eg Jane Smith 10 SL5 9JN Answer. Texts cost 50p each. Keep texts under 160 characters or you may be charged for more than one text.
- Or enter online at bellamagazine.co.uk
- Closes 24 November 2025 at midnight. Bella competition rules apply.

Text entries charged at 50p per text. Normal network messaging rates apply. If you enter after the closing date, you will not be entered, but may be charged. Not available in Eire. This is not a subscription service. Please ensure your entry is completed correctly, as incorrect entries may be charged, but not entered. **You are automatically consenting to receive further communications about these competitions from us via SMA text. This will be charged at your standard network rate, but you will need to do this each time you enter the competition by text.** Your personal data will (regardless of whether you opt out) always be used to process your entry. Phone SP: Spoke 0333 202 3390. Text SP: Bauer Media. Email smshelp@bauermedia.co.uk or call 0330 159 2525. See our general terms and our privacy policy at bauerdatapromise.co.uk

Terms & Conditions: The prize draw is open to all to residents of the UK (including Channel Islands and the Isle of Man), Eire or BFPOs, aged 18 or over, except anyone connected with this competition. Only one entry per person. Our prize is two toy and games bundles worth £500. Prize is non-transferable and cannot be exchanged for cash. No purchase necessary. To be valid, entries must be received on or before 24 November 2025. Travel not included. The Editor's decision is final, and no correspondence can be entered into. Your information will only be used to administer promotions in accordance with our privacy policy. Entry implies acceptance of these rules. Promoter: H Bauer Publishing. Full T&Cs can be found at bauerlegal.co.uk/competition-terms.html

Over to YOU!

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£50 Star letter

Remembering Frank

After reading Emma Cleal's story 'My brave mum raised thousands to honour our son's memory' (issue 42), I donated to Be More Frank, the charity she set up in memory of her teenage son Frank, who died from cancer. I can't imagine what it's like to live through that. Emma's 80-year-old mother, who did the skydive, is a trooper!

Amber Jacobs, Frodsham

Hard work pays off

The story of Reesha Lewis, 'How I walked off 14 stone' (issue 41), is truly inspirational to me. Too many people look for a quick fix through fat jabs, which could often come at a price with horrific side effects. The clear message from Reesha's story is: move more and eat less.

Mary Cook, Gainsborough

Talking point

A mum went viral after admitting that she takes her children out of school every year for their birthday. But some parents argued there is no need, and they can celebrate once it's home time. So we ask… Is it OK to keep kids off school on their birthday?

No, that sends the wrong message. It's more fun for them to spend the day with their friends and celebrate with family afterwards.
Sofia, Coventry

I don't see why not – I take the day off work for my special day, so this shows our children that they're as important and should celebrate themselves.
Gillian, Hayle

Of course not! Does that mean that parents have to take the day off work too? And what if you have more than one child? Not realistic by any standards.
Michaela, Manchester

I can see why she feels this, given that many schools are clamping down on birthday treats. But being at school means they can be with their friends.
Verity, Southampton

By Shereen Low, **Pictures** Shutterstock, SWNS

THIS WEEK Bella LOVES...

An iconic tote

Book lovers, let your adoration for the written word be known with this iconic tote from the London Review of Books. With three different colourways, this red and white classic version was our favourite – and perfect for the season ahead. It's ethically sourced, with an internal pocket for your books or whatever else you need. A great gift for your bookworm bestie. Priced £20 from the London Review Bookshop or lrbstore.co.uk/collections/canvas-bags

London Review of Books

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‘I fell in love with friend – and left husband of 18 yea

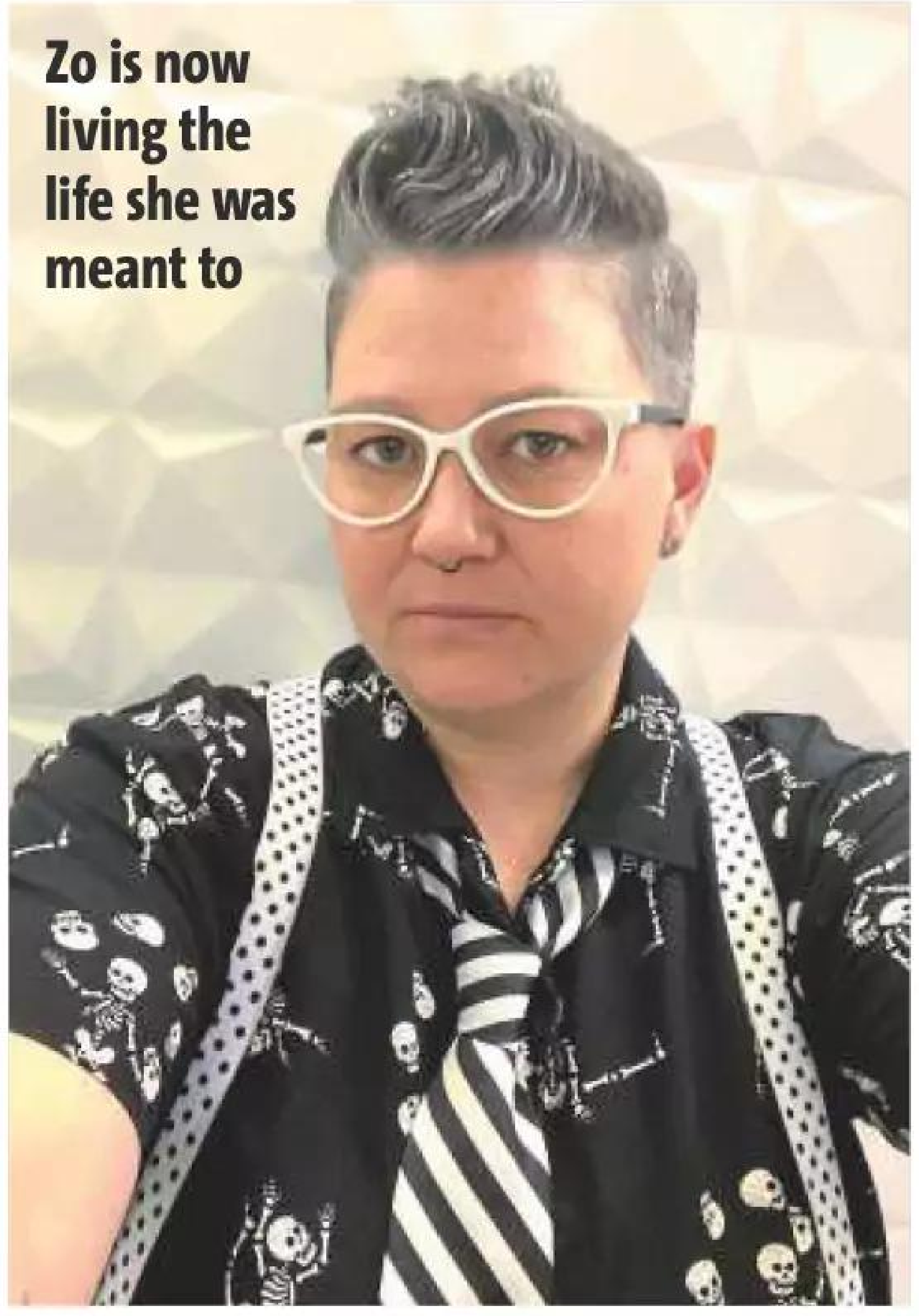
When Zo Wilson, 40, realised she had feelings for another woman, it turned her world upside down. Now, she’s embracing her true self and is happier than ever

Zo on her wedding day in 2005

Watching on as our children played together, I smiled at my friend. We’d recently got to know each other as we were both homeschooling our kids, so we would often meet up. She was going through some difficult things in her life, and when she confided in me, it bonded us quickly. There was something about being with her that lifted me. It was as if I’d been plugged in for the first time in years.

I wanted to spend all my time with her and, when we weren’t together, I missed her and found myself constantly wondering where she was and what she was up to. It was undeniable that I had some sort of feelings for her. However, I was married to a man, who I’d been with since I was 15. Although I pretended everything was fine, deep down, I was confused. And it wasn’t the first time this had happened either.

Her mum Deirdre has always been supportive


Zo is now living the life she was meant to

At 14, I’d sense a fluttering feeling in my stomach every time I was near one of my female friends. Back then, I’d never felt as drawn to anyone as I was to her. I questioned why that was, and although I did wonder if I might be gay, I quickly batted the thought from my mind. The following year, I got a boyfriend, and by the time I was 18, we were engaged. We were married two years later, and soon after, I was pregnant with our first baby. Our daughter arrived when I was 23, and five years later we had a son too. My husband and I both loved being parents and doted on the kids. But while we got on well and rarely fought, there was a lack of intimacy between us. I knew it was more to do with me than him.

‘There was a lack of intimacy’

Whenever he tried anything in the bedroom, I’d make up an excuse to avoid it. I told myself it was just that I wasn’t a very affectionate or sexual person.

But now, in 2019, my feelings for this other mum were intense and I just couldn’t deny how I felt and who I was. Although I hadn’t thought of it as anything other than a friendship

my
my,
rs’

Natalia and Zo

at first, I sensed it was something more now. Even my husband had noticed a change in my behaviour, saying that I was acting strangely. I’d clean the house frantically, just to try to occupy my mind with something other than her. Whatever I was feeling inside, I had no intention of acting on it. *You’re married*, I reminded myself daily.

Eventually, my husband just came out with it and asked, ‘Are you in love with this woman?’. I denied it, but soon after, my friend asked me the same question herself. Once again, I said no but I did confess that I was confused about how I was really feeling.

Soon after, the friendship between us broke down, and the grief I felt about losing her from my life was overwhelming. My husband found it strange that losing a friend, who I’d only known for a short period of time, had hit me so hard. It raised questions about my sexuality again, which I kept denying, so I started therapy to work through my thoughts.

Then, in 2020, after 18 years together, my marriage collapsed. The kids found it really tough at first, and that was upsetting for both of us. But even though we’d split, it still took another year for me to finally admit to myself that I was a lesbian. I didn’t need to sit my mum Deirdre and the rest of my family down and come out, as I knew it wouldn’t phase them. Instead, I just started talking openly about it, and they were supportive. The kids had been raised to accept everyone, so they were fine with it too – they’d found the divorce much harder to cope with.

Now that I’d accepted who I was and understood the feelings I’d had for the friend I’d fallen for when the children were younger, I knew it was time to put myself out there. There were no gay clubs or bars near me that I could just pop into, so the only way I could meet people seemed to be through dating apps. I tentatively signed up to some and started chatting with women. Having been with the same man since I was 15, I found being back on the dating scene really daunting, never mind that I was now trying to meet women instead of men.

‘I found it too difficult’

In the end, I found it too difficult to find anyone through the apps. So, with a few friends I’d made while using them, I decided to start a social group on Facebook for queer women and trans people. To my surprise, it really took off.

Then, around two months after I started the social group, my friend introduced me to Natalia, who was non-binary, meaning they didn’t identify as male or female. I found them fascinating, intelligent and beautiful. A friendship was formed, and it soon became more. After spending time in the company of non-binary people, I found myself really relating to them. It had always been in the back of my head since I’d came out, but I felt I had to deal with my sexuality first, not wanting to take on too much at once. I’d been with Natalia for 18 months when I sat them down and said being non-binary was something I wanted to explore. They were encouraging and supportive. ‘I’m here for you, whatever you want to do,’ they said.

I’m so glad that I came out when I did. Natalia and I are engaged and I’m finally living the life I was always meant to live. If anyone had told me 10 years ago this was where I’d be, I’d have laughed, but I’m telling my story to show other people that there’s always time to discover who you truly are.

By Tanya Martin, **Pictures** Kate Whatman

Dear Kate...

Counsellor Kate Medlin answers your personal, sexual and emotional problems

Always the bridesmaid, never the bride

Q I have a different dad to my three sisters. My biological dad left when my mum was pregnant with me, and she met the man I've always called my dad when I wasn't even two. He agreed to marry my mum and bring me up as his own. When I was 13, I overheard my parents talking and found out the truth. As you can imagine, it was a shock, but I didn't tell anyone. A few years later, it all came out in an argument I had with my dad. Fast forward to last week, and my baby sister just got engaged. She's 27, I'm 36. When I found out, I just sobbed. Although I've been with my boyfriend for seven years, he's never proposed, and doesn't think it would solve how I feel about myself anyway. My past relationships have always ended because they couldn't commit. I really love my boyfriend, and most of the time, I know he loves me. But it's like I don't deserve to belong to this club that everyone else is joining. Why am I always left feeling like this?

A I have a feeling that you've written about your family history, as you have a hunch that it has something to do with this sense you have about yourself. About not belonging, and feeling like everyone else is allowed entry, but you're stopped at the door. As I often find myself saying, it isn't the issue that's the issue, it's the way we deal with the issue. The fact that your biological dad left before you were even born would of course have had an impact on you, because when it comes to parents, we *do* miss what we never had. But keeping it a secret from you has done far more harm than if you'd known the truth from the start. Because secrets bring along their painful bed-fellow – shame. You felt that shame when

She can't be friends with her

Q I want my daughter to stop being friends with a particular child. They're both seven, go to the same school, and often have playdates. But the other day, when they were playing with some dolls, my daughter put two boy dolls together and said that they were getting married, and her friend said, 'That's disgusting! It's wrong for a boy to marry a boy!'. My daughter seemed confused. My brother is gay and is married to his lovely husband who has been a part of our family for many years. If that's what her family teach her, that's up to them, but I certainly don't want my daughter mixing with narrow minded people like them. What should I do?

A It's clear that she has been taught these views, because children aren't born thinking this way. You need to trust that you are educating your daughter to develop a greater sense of acceptance, and will be more open-minded. You can't protect her from every opinion. And even at this young age, it's important you let her make her own decisions about who her friends are. Talk to her about what her friend said, and let her know that there are people who have different views to you. You could even say that you regret not saying something to her at the time, because it's important to speak up when you feel someone is speaking unkindly.

I ruined my own party

Q I threw a birthday party last week, but didn't really enjoy it. A few of my so-called friends wouldn't get up and dance. I'd provided nibbles, but they ran out and I heard mutterings that I hadn't made enough. And to top it off, a couple of the girls who I consider to be my best friends left early. I think a lot of people had a good time, but I didn't because I was so preoccupied with worrying about whether people were enjoying themselves. Why did I ruin it for myself?

A Do you see how you are focusing on all the aspects of your party that weren't perfect and ignoring all the bits that went well? Most of your friends danced the night away, enjoyed your nibbles and left when it ended. For some reason, you seem to have decided that the friends who didn't dance, or left early, have done so to insult you. I think, underneath your anger, you are hurt, because you believe their actions mean the party, and by extension, you, aren't good enough. But there could be so many other reasons for why they acted this

Letters and replies may be edited for length/clarity. **Pictures:** Alamy

Write to **Dear Kate**,
Bella, The Lantern,
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London, NW1 2PL, or email
bella.advice@bauermedia.co.uk.

Kate will attempt to respond to as many letters as possible through her page

you discovered the secret – this is why you said that you couldn't tell anyone what you'd found out. I feel so sad for that poor young girl of 13. How painful and confusing it must have been for you, holding that huge piece of information all by yourself. No wonder you have been left feeling that everyone else knows how to belong, but no one will let you join. The things that happen to us when we're growing up lead to us believing certain things to be true. However, this is just the story we create about ourselves. It isn't reality. Regarding your relationship, I think the reason getting married feels so important to you is because you feel locked out of that club, but also because you want there to be a public declaration that you are loved, and lovable. To make up for all the secrets that were kept from you in the past. A wedding is just one day. The relationship is what counts. Married or not.

---

way. Maybe they aren't confident about dancing. Maybe they had baby-sitters to get back for. You simply don't know. Don't believe the worst when there could be so many other explanations.

BELLA ADVICE LINES

Do you suffer from anxiety?
0906 652 5070

Getting over depression?
0906 652 5076

Bereavement
0906 652 5077

Impotence
0906 652 5078

Relationship breakdown
0906 652 5079

Calls cost 65p per minute plus your network access charge. Calls last approximately four minutes. You must be over 18 to call and have the bill payer's permission. UK SP: Spoke 0333 202 3390

Horoscopes

By Jane Struthers **For the week 4–17 November**

TAURUS
21 April – 21 May 2025

This is a powerful time for you personally. Not only are you feeling the urge to move away from an association or habit that's lost its appeal, you're also starting to reconsider a plan that no longer seems a good choice.

Theme of the fortnight: Connections

☎ 0906 650 7231

GEMINI
22 May – 21 June

How are you getting along with certain people? You're trying hard to be diplomatic and considerate, but you have a sneaking suspicion that this isn't as effective as you'd like, especially if you're facing someone's defensive or belligerent attitude.

Theme of the fortnight: Politesse

☎ 0906 650 7232

CANCER
22 June – 23 July

If you've been thinking about losing weight, or making any other improvements to your health, this is a really good time to start. Take care of little details on the 15th, whether they're connected with your daily routine, home life or well-being.

Theme of the fortnight: Blossoming

☎ 0906 650 7233

LEO
24 July – 23 August

Your competitive streak is showing! Anything that someone else can do, you'll do better! Take care that this doesn't create a bad-tempered atmosphere with a loved one because, deep down, they feel overshadowed by you.

Theme of the fortnight: Emotional security

☎ 0906 650 7234

VIRGO
24 August – 23 September

Your mind is working rapidly, in true Virgoan style, particularly when you're dealing with domestic and family matters. If you've got to make a decision you'll do it quickly and maybe even impatiently, which could lead to snap judgements.

Theme of the fortnight: Brainpower

☎ 0906 650 7235

LIBRA
24 September – 23 October

It's a busy phase but find time for some of the activities that you really enjoy. Grabbing some peace and quiet feels like a luxury on the 14th, but it's essential to help you keep all the different aspects of your life in their proper perspectives.

Theme of the fortnight: Practicalities

☎ 0906 650 7236

SCORPIO
24 October – 22 November

You're fired up by a strong sense of purpose at the moment. It gives you the drive to tackle an imposing but important task with confidence. As the days pass, your focus shifts to plans for the future. It pays to take the long view rather than be short-sighted.

Theme of the fortnight: Optimism

☎ 0906 650 7237

Vicky Pattison – 38 on 16 November

ARIES
21 March – 20 April

Start clearing the decks of anything that is absorbing your precious time without giving you something valuable in return, even if you have to do this gradually. Keep your options open on the 17th and be prepared to reconsider an opinion or attitude.

Theme of the fortnight: Exploration

☎ 0906 650 7230

SAGITTARIUS
23 November – 21 December

The resources that you share with others are in the spotlight right now, because you're starting to realise the need to review some of them. This might mean cutting back on your spending or realising that you can't rely on someone's input over the coming months. .

Theme of the fortnight: Energy

☎ 0906 650 7238

CAPRICORN
22 December – 20 January

Enjoy your social life whenever you get the chance. It will do you good to mix with kindred spirits and you could also get to know someone new. Don't underestimate yourself on the 17th. Someone needs your cool-headed advice or guidance, and you're happy to give it.

Theme of the fortnight: Experience

AQUARIUS
21 January – 19 February

Prepare for a change of plan in your private life. Reassess what's happening at the moment and share your thoughts with the people concerned, even if you are surprised by some of the things they suggest. Be positive on the 15th.

Theme of the fortnight: The past

☎ 0906 650 7240

PISCES
20 February – 20 March

Get set for a highly dynamic period! You don't want to let the grass grow under your feet, particularly when it comes to your long-range plans and your reputation. This is a great opportunity to push ahead with any activities designed to get you noticed.

Theme of the fortnight: Pastures new

☎ 0906 650 7241

For a more detailed weekly forecast call the number for your star sign. Calls cost 65p per minute plus your network access charge. Weekly forecasts last approximately four minutes. Messages are pre-recorded. For entertainment and guidance purposes only. Users must be over 18. Service provider: Spoke. Customer service number 0333 202 3390 (9am-5pm).

Magical, memory-making ideas that won't cost a penny

Free merry days out

Santa sightings

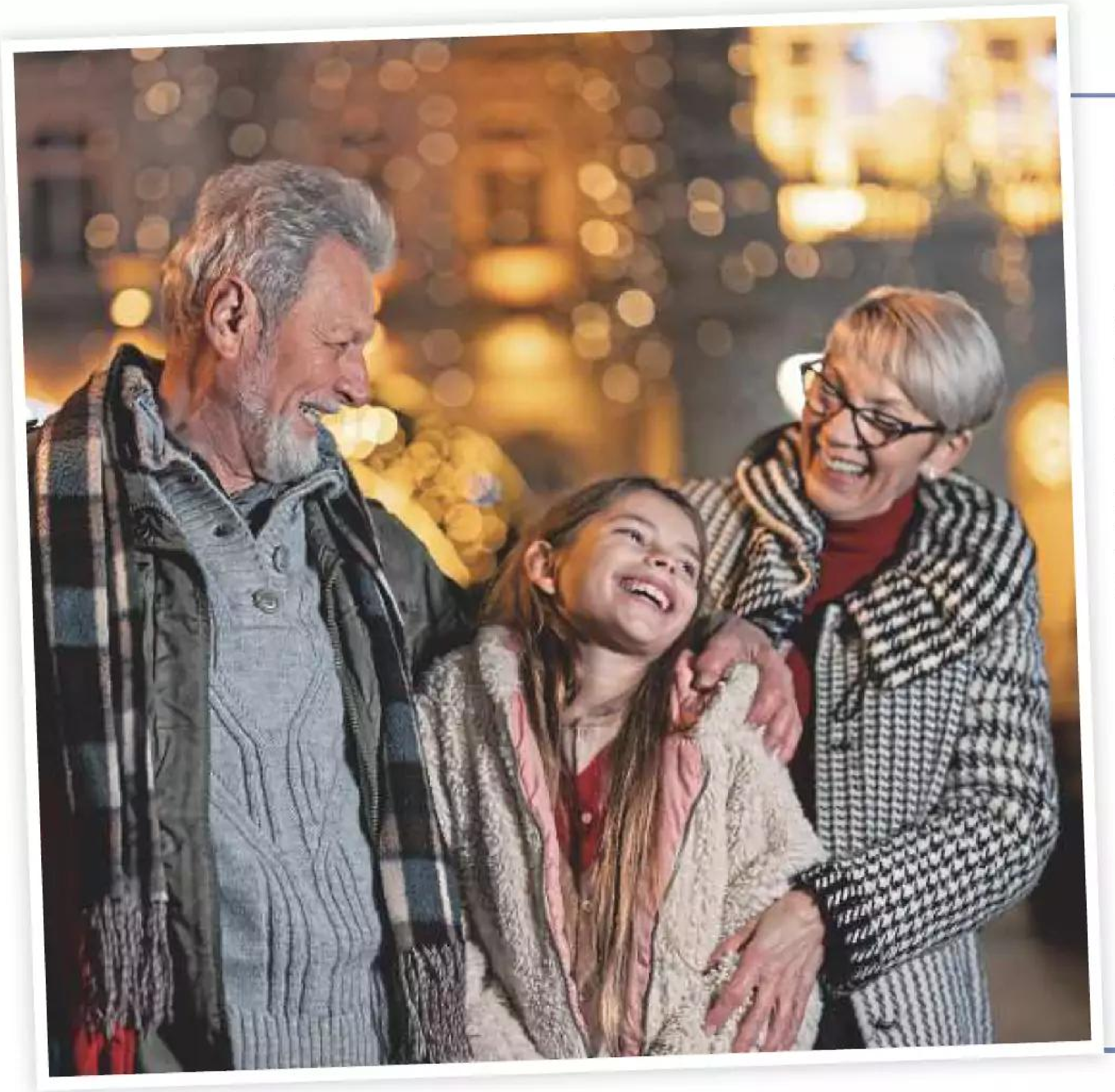
You don't need to splurge on grotto tickets to catch a glimpse of Father Christmas. Across the UK, Santa makes plenty of free appearances – you just need to know where to look. In Middlesbrough, the town's bumper Christmas weekend includes a festive parade, live music and light shows – with Santa often leading the fun. In Glasgow, Buchanan Galleries is hosting a free Santa's Grotto (gift included) throughout the season, while Essex libraries run festive craft corners featuring a special guest in red.

Garden centres and supermarkets in the North and Midlands often welcome Santa without charge – just check local listings and arrive early for a chance of a cheery wave.

Twinkling trails

London's festive lights are a free spectacle. Start in Covent Garden, then stroll through Oxford Circus, Carnaby Street, and the glittering window displays at Selfridges, Bond Street, and Hamleys – where you might even spot some festive elves! For a peaceful break from the crowds, head to All Souls Church on Langham Place, which hosts beautiful free carol services complete with mince pies and twinkly lights. All carol services are family friendly, but 9.30am carols on Sundays cater for those with younger children.

Further afield, Torquay's Bay of Lights offers a free seafront illumination trail, while many towns and villages now publish their very own DIY Christmas Light Trail maps.



Carol nights

Across the UK, churches and community spaces are filled with the sounds of the season – and many host free carol concerts open to all. Glastonbury Abbey's medieval fair combines festive music with markets, while Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery will showcase choirs, Morris dancers, and live performances every Sunday in December.

Whether it's a candlelit service or a brass band outside your local shop, festive music brings people together. Check noticeboards at libraries, churches and community halls. No need to join in – simply wrap up warm, sip something hot and soak up the atmosphere.

Festive walks

Nature puts on its own show in winter – and it's free to enjoy. Parks, woodlands and coastlines across Scotland, Wales and the South West become peaceful playgrounds for festive strolls. The National Trust opens many walking routes without charge, and some even run seasonal guided walks where you can explore, then warm up with hot drinks or treats at nearby manor houses. Find your nearest at nationaltrust.org.uk.

Closer to home, search 'Christmas trail near me' on your council website or local Facebook page, or check if a town nearby is running a light trail competition this year.

Cosy crafts

From wreath-making to hand-made cards, crafting is a lovely (and free!) way to get into the festive spirit. Across the UK, libraries, museums and community centres host seasonal sessions for all ages – in Nottinghamshire, local libraries often run decoration-making days, while Cardiff's St Fagans Museum has held festive family workshops.

At home, try Christmas trail bingo, a DIY carol night or a window-decorating challenge – some towns even hold competitions! You could also host a festive film night with homemade popcorn and hot chocolate. It's easy, cosy and completely free – a perfect way to make memories without spending much.

By Emma Hawkins. **Pictures** Getty

TV WEEK

Trespasses

Sunday 9 November, Channel 4

It's 1975 and the Troubles are shaping the lives of those living in Northern Ireland. When Catholic schoolteacher Cushla (Lola Petticrew) meets Michael (Tom Cullen), an older Protestant married man, who often defends IRA suspects, both know how dangerous a relationship would be. But neither seem able to resist one another. Gillian Anderson also stars as Cushla's mother Gina in this adaptation of the best-selling novel by Louise Kennedy. 'I fell in love with Louise's stunning book when I read it in proof,' Gillian explains. 'I was immediately drawn to the tragi-comic creation that is Gina and couldn't resist when Louise asked me to play her.'

By Caroline Blight, Amber Connolly, Amy Rowland **Pictures** Channel 4, National Geographic, BBC, Netflix, Apple

BULLSEYE

Sunday 9 November, ITV1

After last year's hugely successful Christmas special, the classic darts show is back for a full series. Hosted again by Freddie Flintoff, it follows the original format with the playing teams made up of an amateur darts player, known as the 'thrower', and their team partner, the 'knower'. They combine their skills across different game boards, while answering questions. 'I love the darts and *Bullseye* was one of my favourite shows as a kid,' says Freddie. 'I was really pleased people seemed to like the Christmas special, I'm thrilled I get to host the series.'

Palm Royale

Wednesday 12 November, Apple TV

Sunglasses on, we are heading back to the late '60s and the glamour of Palm Beach for this comic drama, which exposes the dark side of the wealthy Florida community. Picking up where series one left off, we finally get answers to the many questions we were left with. Maxine Dellacorte (Kristen Wiig) is a social pariah after a very public breakdown onstage at the Beach Ball and will have to pick up the pieces and prove not only does she belong, but she could rule the town. The all-star cast returns with the addition of John Stamos and the iconic Patti LuPone.

TV timings are subject to change

The Beast In Me

Thursday 13 November, Netflix

This tense drama follows acclaimed author Aggie Wiggs (Claire Danes) who has hidden herself away following the tragic death of her young son. She can't write and can barely function until she finds an unlikely subject for a new book when the house next door is bought by Nile Jarvis (Matthew Rhys). He's a formidable real estate mogul who was once the prime suspect in his wife's disappearance. Aggie finds herself horrified and obsessed with him in equal measure. Soon she's compulsively hunting for the truth in a dangerous game of cat and mouse that threatens to turn deadly.

MR BURTON

Monday 10 November, BBC1

Richard Burton was one of the world's biggest movie stars, who married Elizabeth Taylor twice, and had a fondness for drink. But how did unremarkable miner's son Richard Jenkins from South Wales transform himself into a powerful, iconic actor? This biopic, starring Toby Jones and Harry Lawtey, about Burton's early life – released first in cinemas and now being shown to mark the centenary of his birth – reveals the crucial role that his mentor Philip Burton played in nurturing his acting ambitions. Igniting a passion for literacy while also honing his voice, he later adopted his surname too.

THE INFINITE EXPLORER WITH HANNAH FRY

Monday 10 November, National Geographic

Professor Hannah Fry packs her bags for a jet-setting adventure but this isn't your usual celebrity travelogue. Instead the mathematician is looking to decode six iconic destinations and understand what makes them unique. 'I just really like the idea of thinking about how, where a country is in the world, changes who they end up being,' she explains. First up is South Korea where she discovers how the country has transformed itself into a powerhouse of culture, business and tech. Watch out as she experiences the lucrative world of Esports and later tries taekwondo with a blackbelt.

NEW THIS WEEK

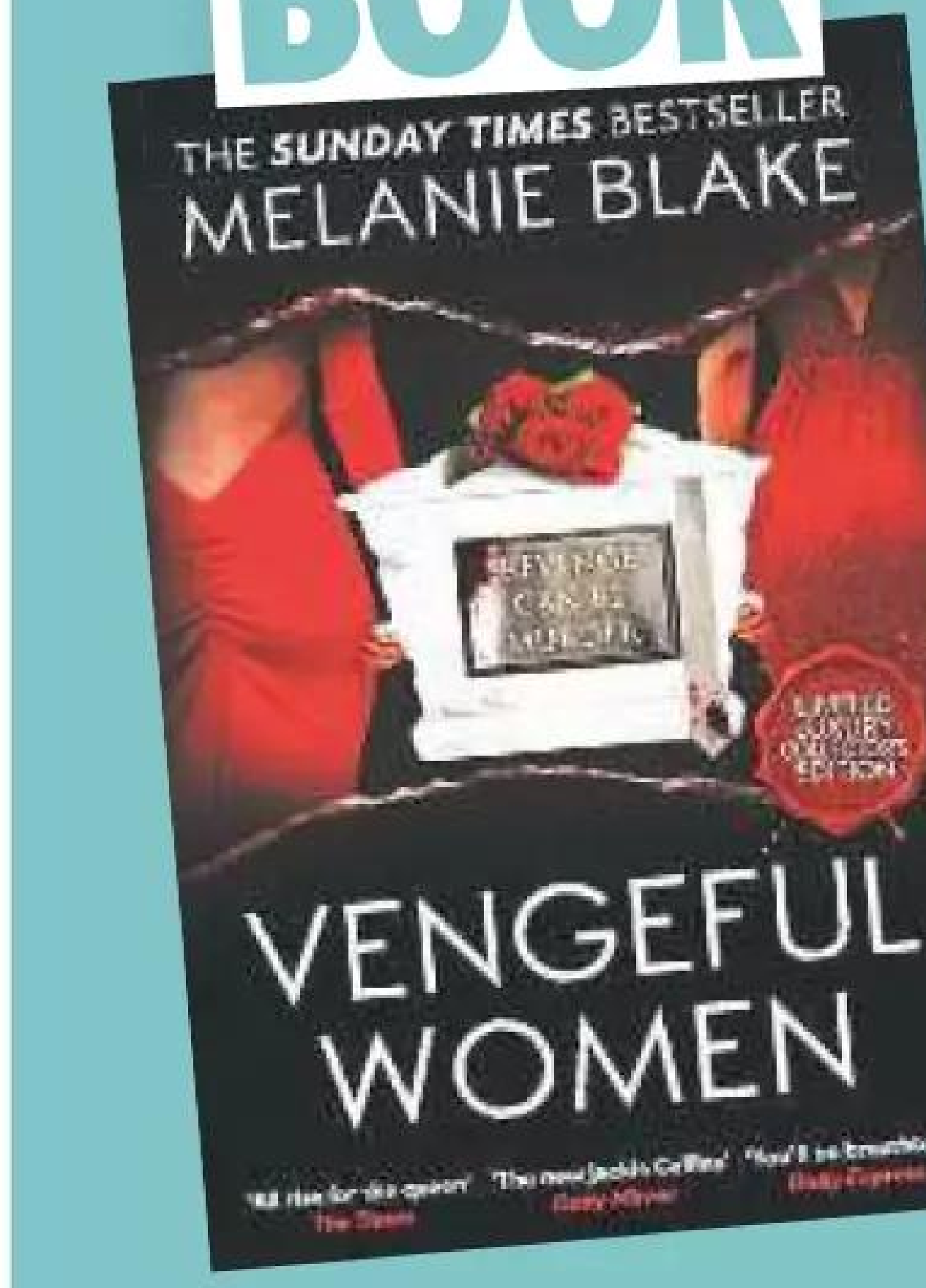
FILM The Choral

In 1916, as war rages on, a Yorkshire town has lost most of its men to the army. With the local choral society's annual performance looming, the group enlists some unlikely teens and the musically gifted – but socially scandalous – Dr Henry Guthrie. As conscription papers arrive, the community brings power to the dark days as they discover that the best response to the chaos may just be making music together.

EVENT Clays Soho

The popular immersive shooting experience has opened its biggest venue yet, taking over three floors in its new Soho, London, flagship. Set in a '30s Art Deco venue, the space blends games, private areas and late-night DJs with top-class cocktails and food. Christmas celebrations are available to book now across all London and Birmingham locations. For more information, head to clays.bar

BOOK Vengeful Women



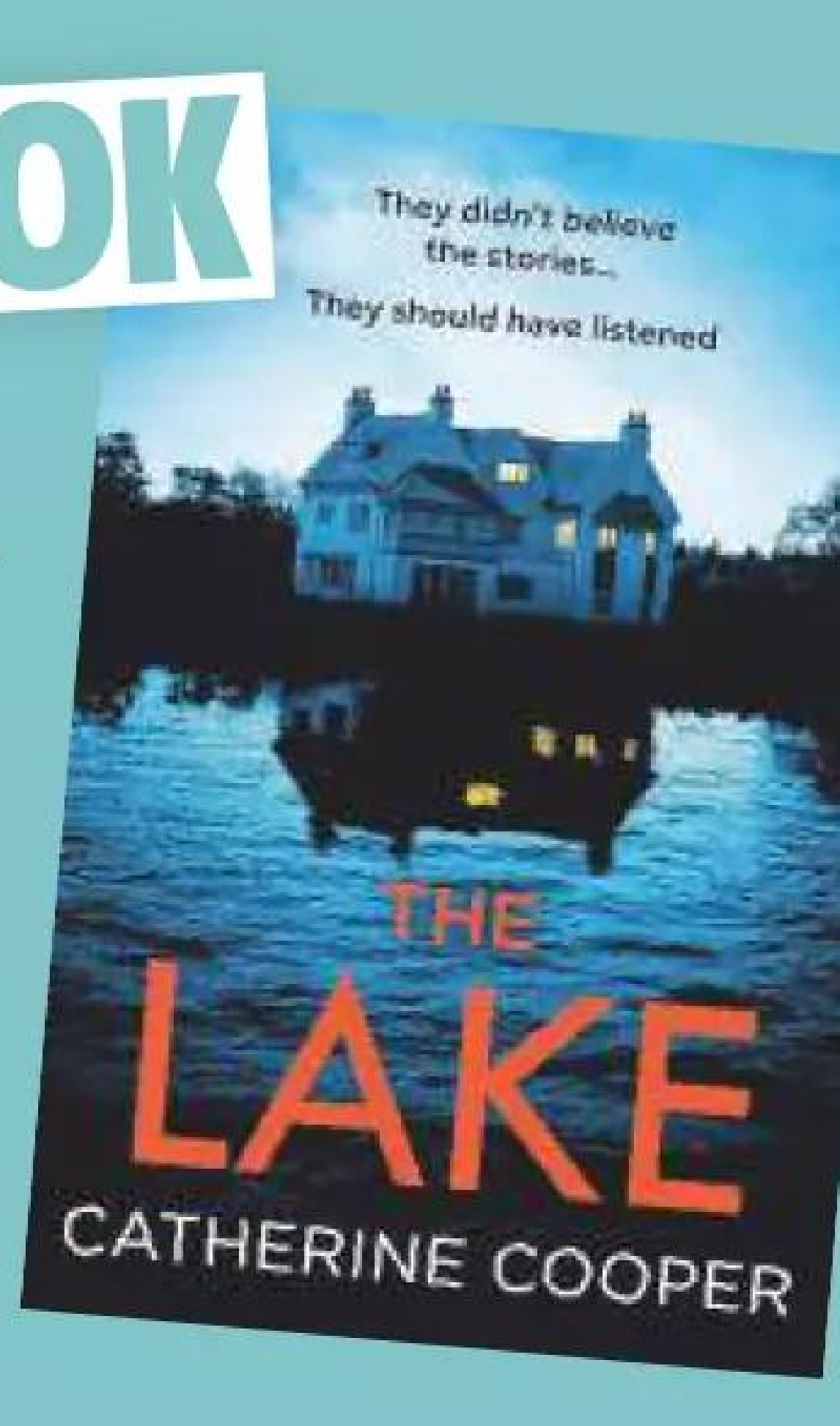
by Melanie Blake (Piranha Publishing)

In this gripping new chapter in the Falcon Bay series, on a private island off England's coast, five powerful women await trial for manslaughter – a soap star, agent, producer, writer and casting director. Their nemesis, Jake Monroe, profits from their downfall, turning the island they all love into a twisted theme park. But as the women plot revenge and dark secrets surface, their world unravels. With bodies piling up and empires crumbling, one truth remains: hell hath no fury like vengeful women. Full of spice and scandal – we couldn't turn the pages quick enough.

BOOK The Lake

By Catherine Cooper (HarperCollins)

Guests at Creaglie Castle expect luxury, breathtaking views, and maybe a ghostly sighting. But when a violent storm cuts them off from the mainland, things turn deadly. As dark secrets from the past emerge and trust dissolves, it's clear not everyone will leave alive. The lake holds answers, but will it reveal its secrets before another body falls victim to the castle's chilling mysteries? Another gripping read full of suspense from Catherine Cooper.



Anita: ‘I’n
old age

Anita and Tracy-Ann were thrilled to work together

Nigel proves he’s still a heartthrob

Two of the sexiest septuagenarians, Anita Dobson and Nigel Havers, are at the centre of this heartwarming story, which celebrates the return of *Play for Today*. The show, which originally aired from 1970 to 1984, has been resurrected by Channel 5 with the same ethos. The series of one-off TV plays is designed to give writers, actors and producers from low-income backgrounds the opportunity to break into the TV industry. First up is a stereotype-busting take on ageing following fiercely independent Cynthia (Dobson, 76) who is forced to start over in a retirement village as she’s reluctantly moved in by her daughter (Tracy-Ann Oberman, 59). By chance an old flame (Havers, 73) is also a resident and secrets surface as they consider the next chapter in their lives. We spoke to Tracy-Ann and Anita to find out more…

It’s wonderful this classic concept is being revived. How did you feel about getting involved?

Anita: It’s one of the happiest jobs I’ve had. Everybody was so lovely and a lot of them were there [working on a show] for the first time and they were just brilliant. Nothing was too much trouble for them, they turned up early in the morning and really did their homework.

Tracy-Ann: Working with Anita was the biggest pull, to actually get to meet properly and to work together was just brilliant. She lived up to every expectation. And it was all about supporting new, up-and-coming talent and giving an opportunity to people who wouldn’t otherwise have had one.

> ‘Anita lived up to every expectation’

Did you do any research on retirement home living?

Anita: I promised I wouldn’t put my mother into retirement because she, like Cynthia, didn’t want to know. I was actually going to pack up my career and just look after her. But there was a moment when I was taking her to the loo and she suddenly grabbed my wrist, looked straight into my eyes and said, ‘I hate this’. So she chose a retirement home in the end.

Tracy-Ann: My character was an insight into those working women with children who are sandwiched between them and elderly parents. But what I loved is that Anita’s character is not some doddery old woman who’s

n not fighting –you can't!'

As the iconic *Play for Today* returns to our screens, Anita Dobson, Tracy-Ann Oberman and Nigel Havers are kicking off with a drama about finding love in later life

Nina Wadia also stars

losing her marbles – she's a vibrant, excited, sexy woman whose body is just getting a bit frail.

Cynthia is going kicking and screaming into old age – how do you relate to that Anita?

Anita: I'm not fighting and screaming going into old age – you can't. The deal is you come in and, at some point, you've got to get out because there's a kid behind you. My mother always said, 'Darling, every age has its compensation'. There's always something, it's no good fighting it, deal with what you've got, find the good stuff and hang with that.

Tracy-Ann: That's how positive it is to be around Anita – a beautiful human being and spirit!

Anita: My father said to me, 'When you come into this world, darling, you come with nothing. When you leave, you leave with nothing – in between it's just stuff. Whatever you have to leave behind, it's junk.' The whole point of being here is just to learn and to interact. It's relationships, it's love, which is what's so nice about this episode of *Play for Today* – it's about relationships.

Did you enjoy singing with Nigel Havers? It looked like fun!

Anita: That part in particular was a lot of fun. I think Nigel was very nervous about it and so was I. Once we got past the fear, we just let go. We really did have a laugh. I got very emotional because everybody was up and dancing and singing, and I just thought, this is how life should be.

Play for Today finished in 1984, but what are your memories of it? Was it something you always wanted to do?

Anita: I remember it so well. Obviously, I'm of that age and I think it's just a compilation of really good stories – produced really well – and it's lovely to see it come back again. Long may it last. I think it's great to give young people a chance and it's really difficult to get into this business or any business. So to actually start from rock bottom is really tough.

Tracy-Ann: I remember the legacy of *Cathy Come Home* [a TV play from 1966 about homelessness] and those really important *Play for Today* episodes that gave working class and marginalised people a voice. It was so important and really sad when it ended. To bring this back just feels like a real treat.

> 'We really did have a laugh!'

You have both been married to Den Watts in _EastEnders_ [Anita as Angie in the '80s and Tracy-Ann as Chrissie in the early noughties]. Did you swap stories?

Tracy-Ann: I've always been such a massive fan of Anita's and that *EastEnders* divorce story is iconic. To finally meet up with her was such a pleasure.

Anita: We still need to have that conversation!

Tracy-Ann: It was like it was meant to be and I only wish I'd met Anita earlier. There's an understanding when you've shared a husband!

● *Never Too Late: Play for Today, Thursday 13 November, 5*

The pair were nervous about singing together

By Caroline Blight, **Pictures** Channel 5

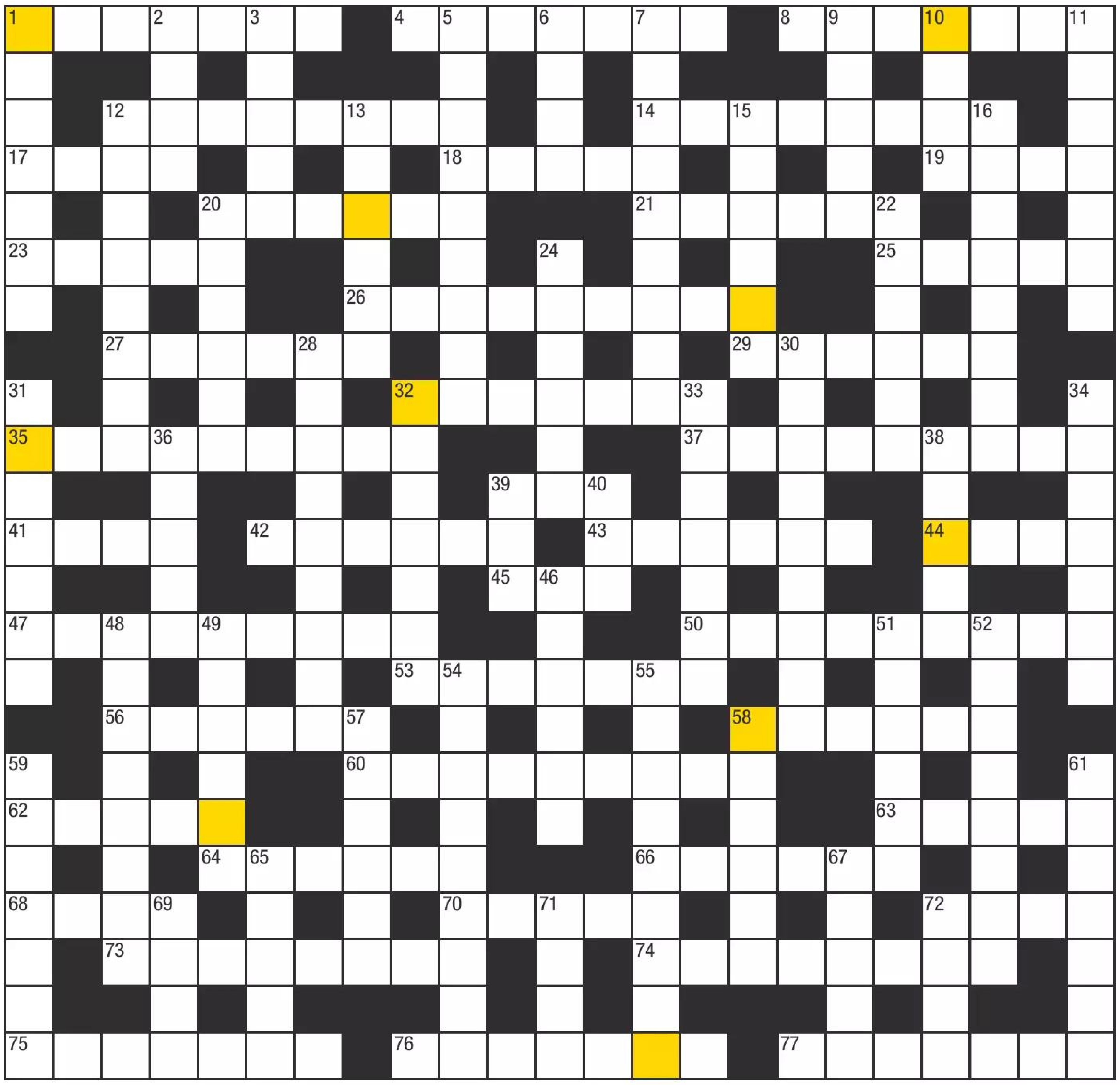
Puzzles

YOU could be in with a chance of winning £200

PRIZE crossword

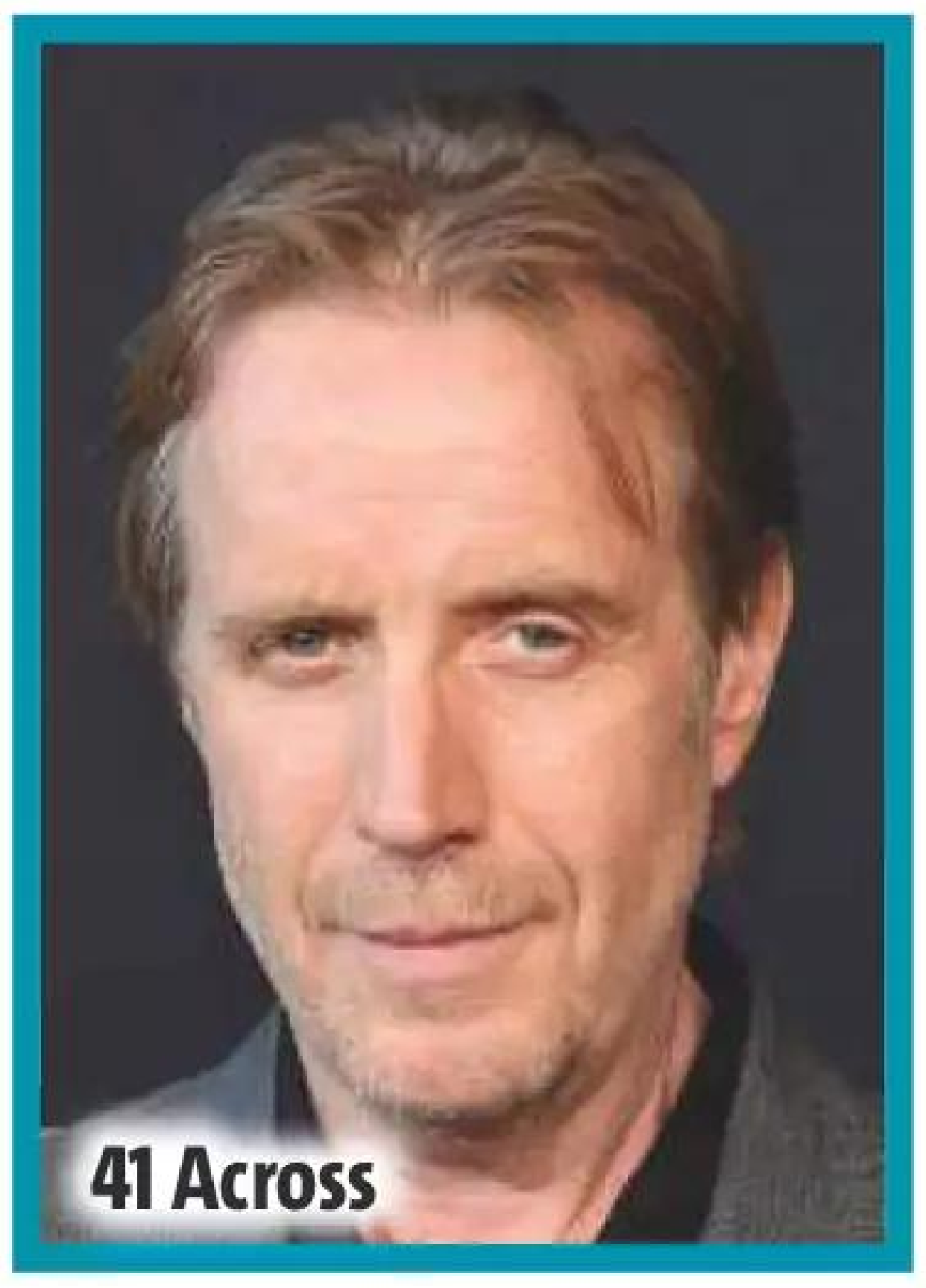
WIN £200

Solve the crossword to find, reading from top to bottom in the shaded squares, the name of a US actress. This is your competition entry answer. See the 'How to enter' panel, below right.



Across

1 Turned red with embarrassment (7)
4 Postal location (7)
8 Small pouch worn in front of a kilt (7)
12 Tom Cruise comedy, *Risky* - - - (8)
14 In the open air (8)
17 Baby horse (4)
18 Aviator (5)
19 At a great distance (4)
20 Italian canal city (6)
21 Historical Irish province, or an overcoat (6)
23 Filthy money? (5)
25 Fruit of the oak (5)



41 Across

26 Ballet position, anagram of BE A SQUARE (9)
27 Small red peppery salad bulb (6)
29 Expression, '- - - you than me' (6)
32 English archer's weapon? (7)
35 Award-winning comedy-drama created by Ricky Gervais (5,4)
37 City in the Scottish Highlands (9)
39 Historical period (3)
41 - - - Ifans, Welsh actor, pictured below left (4)
42 Motor (6)
43 Pointed tooth (6)
44 Meaty sauce served with pasta (4)
45 Horror movie star, Christopher - - - (3)
47 Southwestern US state (3,6)
50 Looking (for) (9)
53 - - - and crosses, pen and paper game (7)
56 *Nutbush City* - - -, Ike & Tina Turner song (6)
58 Story that's told in instalments (6)
60 Factory canteen (9)
62 Capital of Egypt (5)
63 Phrase associated with Arnie's character in *The Terminator*, '- - - la vista, baby' (5)
64 Fixed food allowance (6)
66 Diamond knitwear pattern (6)
68 Larry - - -, actor who plays Mick Shipman in *Gavin & Stacey* (4)
70 Roy Orbison song, *Blue* - - - (5)
72 Fizzy drink (4)
73 - - - Barks, stage star who won the last series of *The Masked Singer* (8)
74 Formal midday meal? (8)
75 TV sports presenter, Gary - - - (7)
76 London rail terminus, - - - Cross (7)
77 Tom Jones classic, *It's Not* - - - (7)

Down

1 - - - Bill, Wild West showman (7)
2 Pixar film featuring the voice of Jamie Foxx (4)
3 Banish (5)
5 Album and song by Eagles (9)
6 Bread bun (4)
7 *Rockin' All Over The World* group (6,3)
9 Part, segment (5)
10 Costa - - -, republic in Central America (4)
11 Drawing closer to (7)
12 Casino card game (8)
13 Frodo in the *LOTR* trilogy, - - - Wood (6)
15 Carrie - - -, Princess Leia in *Star Wars* (6)
16 Most certainly! (2,6)
20 Seller (6)
22 Slice of bacon (6)
24 Church caretaker and attendant (6)
28 Physicist, eg (9)
30 Tennis score after deuce (9)
31 Chris - - -, Clarkson's predecessor on *Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?* (7)
32 Words of a language (7)
33 Person who sees a crime (7)
34 Make SAUSAGE less intense! (7)
36 Surrey racecourse (5)
38 *Don't Know Why* singer, - - - Jones (5)
39 Snakelike fish (3)
40 Top card? (3)
46 *Around The World In - - - Days*, novel (6)
48 Surname of Serena and Venus (8)
49 National park in SW England (6)
51 Hackneyed phrase (6)
52 Magic trick (8)
54 German-born composer (9)
55 Heavy-duty waterproof cloth (9)
57 The - - -, Danny O'Donoghue's band (6)
58 Musical set in Vietnam, *Miss* - - - (6)
59 Surgeon's blade (7)
61 Sugar heated until brown (7)
65 Variegated stone (5)
67 Lindsay - - -, *Freakier Friday* actress, pictured below (5)
69 Bundle of hay (4)
71 Period of 12 months (4)
72 Dairy animals (4)

67 Down

Crossword Neil Locker. **Pictures** Shutterstock

COMPETITION AND GIVEAWAY RULES Competitions open to residents of the UK (including Channel Islands and the Isle of Man), Eire or BFPOs, aged 18 or over, except Bauer Media employees, its affiliated companies, any promotional partners, or their families and anyone connected with the competitions. Enter by text, online or phone. No purchase necessary. Answers must be the product of own work. Unless expressly stated, travel expenses and spending money is not included. There is no cash alternative to prizes and no alternative holidays can be offered. Prizes are not transferable. No responsibility can be accepted for entries that are delayed, damaged, mislaid or wrongly delivered, or for any loss in service of the online entry mechanism or for entries lost, delayed or corrupted due to computer error in transit. Only one entry per person. A winning entry is the first correct answer drawn after the closing date. For a free entry, enter online at bellamagazine.co.uk. Prizewinners will be notified by post on headed paper or by official email. The results are published. Winners must agree to the publication of their names, age and photos. The Editor's decision is final and no correspondence can be entered into. Your information will only be used to administer promotions in accordance with our privacy policy. Entry implies acceptance of these rules. Promoter: H Bauer Publishing. Full T&Cs can be found at bauerlegal.co.uk/competition-terms.html

Sudoku

Fill in the blank squares with the numbers 1 to 9 so that each row, each column and each smaller 3x3 block contains all the numbers from 1 to 9.

EASY

	6	9	4	7			8	
		2	1		8	7		6
5								
		8			1			
	7			5			9	
			6			3		
								1
3		5	7		6	8		
	1			2	4	9	3	

HARD

9				3				2
	6	7				3	1	
			6		4			
		9				2		
	4	6	2		1	5	9	
		8				1		
			4		7			
	9	5				6	4	
3				6				1

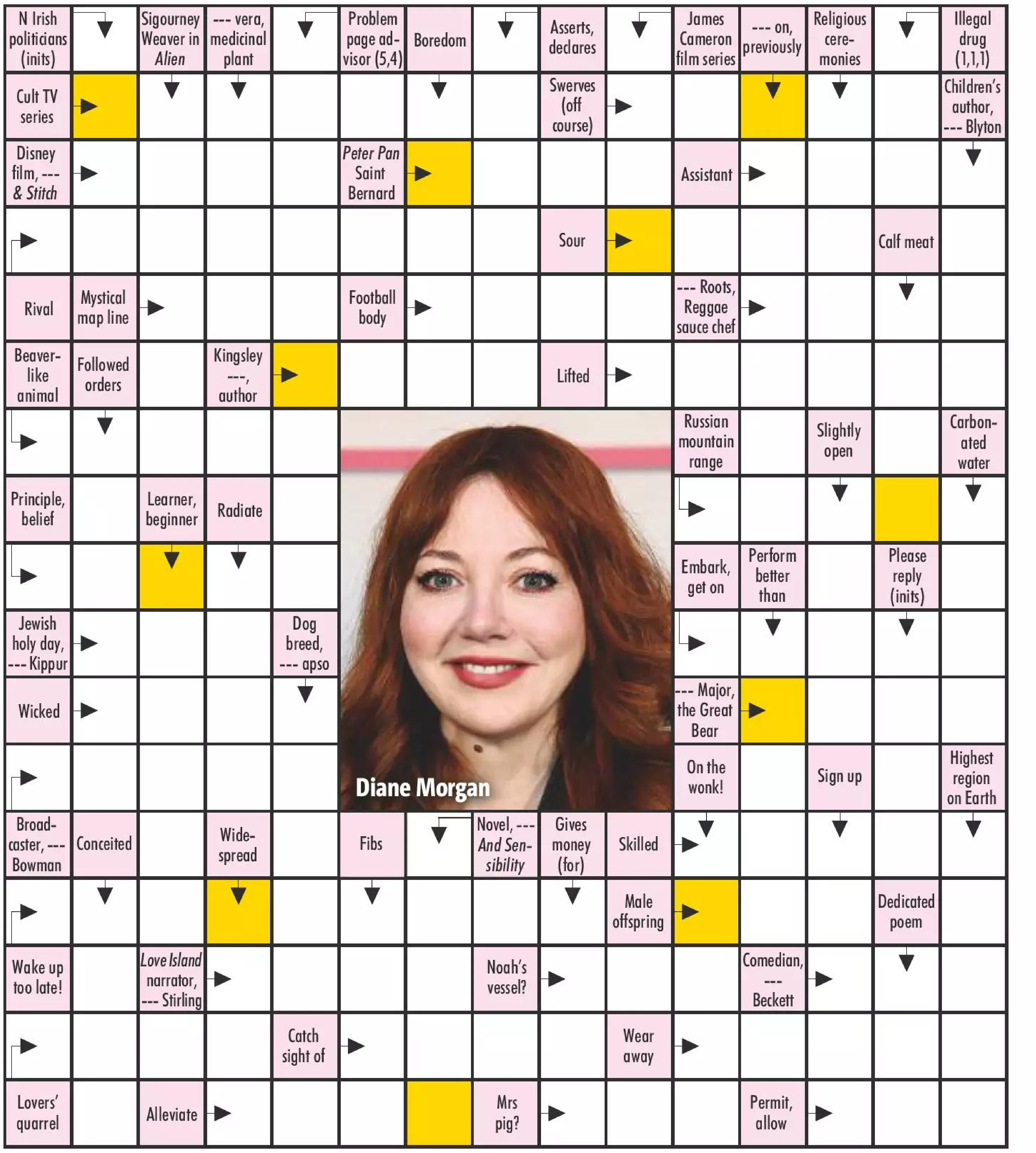
Take a Break Sudoku

Take A Break Sudoku magazine, containing over 80 fun-to-solve puzzles, is on sale now.

PRIZE Arrowword

WIN £200

Solve the clues, writing your answers in the directions shown by the arrows, to reveal, reading down the shaded squares, the name of a job Diane Morgan had before moving into comedy full time. This is your competition entry answer. See the 'How to enter' panel below.



N Irish politicians (inits)
Sigourney Weaver in *Alien*
--- vera, medicinal plant
Problem page adviser (5,4)
Boredom
Asserts, declares
James Cameron film series
--- on, previously
Religious ceremonies
Illegal drug (1,1,1)
Cult TV series
Swerves (off course)
Children's author, --- Blyton
Disney film, --- & Stitch
Peter Pan Saint Bernard
Assistant
Sour
Calf meat
Rival
Mystical map line
Football body
--- Roots, Reggae sauce chef
Beaver-like animal
Followed orders
Kingsley ---, author
Lifted
Russian mountain range
Slightly open
Carbonated water
Principle, belief
Learner, beginner
Radiate
Embark, get on
Perform better than
Please reply (inits)
Jewish holy day, --- Kippur
Dog breed, --- apso
Wicked
--- Major, the Great Bear
On the wonk!
Sign up
Highest region on Earth
Broadcaster, --- Bowman
Conceited
Widespread
Fibs
Novel, --- *And Sensibility*
Gives money (for)
Skilled
Male offspring
Dedicated poem
Wake up too late!
Love Island narrator, --- Stirling
Noah's vessel?
Comedian, --- Beckett
Catch sight of
Wear away
Lovers' quarrel
Alleviate
Mrs pig?
Permit, allow
Diane Morgan

SOLUTIONS

Sudoku solutions can be found online now at bellamagazine.co.uk

ISSUE 42 PRIZE ANSWERS

Crossword
Eminem

Arrowword
Humourbeasts

Full solutions to this week's prize puzzles can be found at bellamagazine.co.uk after the closing date: **24 November 2025**

HOW TO ENTER THE PRIZE COMPETITIONS

BY PHONE: 0901 130 0237

When asked for the issue number, key in 44. Calls cost 50p per call, plus your network access charge. (UK readers only.) You must be 18 or over and have the bill payer's permission.

BY TEXT: 65115

Text BEL44 then a space followed by your name, house number or name, your postcode, then your answer(s), all separated by a space, to 65115, eg Jane Smith 10 SL5 9JN Answer(s). Texts cost 50p plus your standard network rate. Keep texts under 160 characters or you may be charged for more than one text.

- If you enter after the closing date, you will not be entered but may be charged. Not available in Eire. Please ensure your entry is completed correctly, as incorrect entries may be charged but not entered. This is not a subscription service.
- **You are automatically consenting to receive further communications about these competitions from us via SMS text. You can opt out of this at any time by texting STOP to 65115.** This will be charged at your standard network rate, but you will need to do this each time you enter the competition by text. Your personal data will (regardless of whether you opt out) always be used to process your entry. For further information, see general terms and privacy policy at Bauerdatapromise.co.uk.
- Lines close at 11.59pm on **24 November 2025**.

Phone UK SP: Spoke (0333 202 3390). Text SP: Bauer Media. Email smshelp@bauermedia.co.uk or call 0330 159 2525.

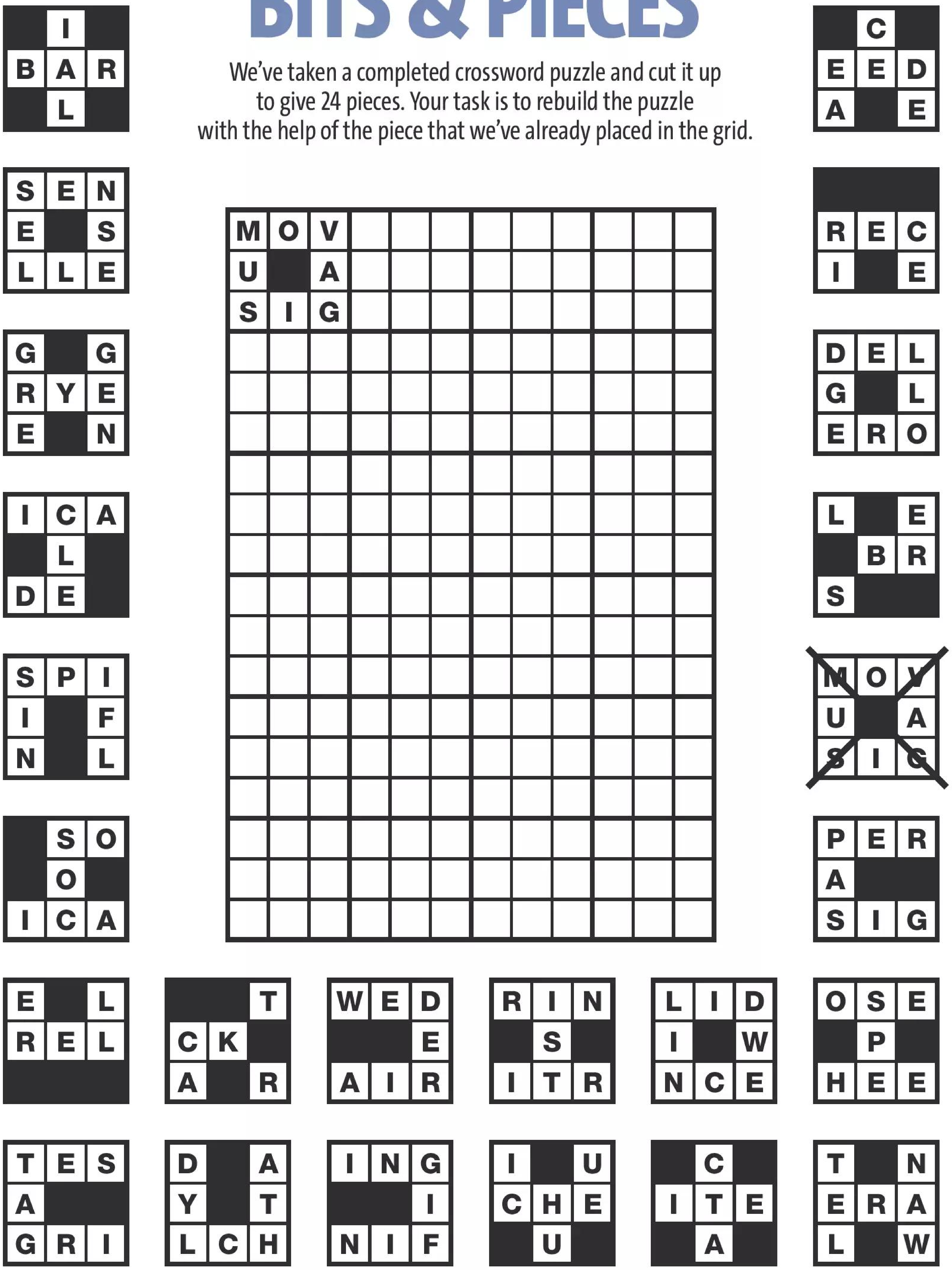
OR ENTER ONLINE:
Bellamagazine.co.uk

Continued over the page...

Puzzles contin

BITS & PIECES

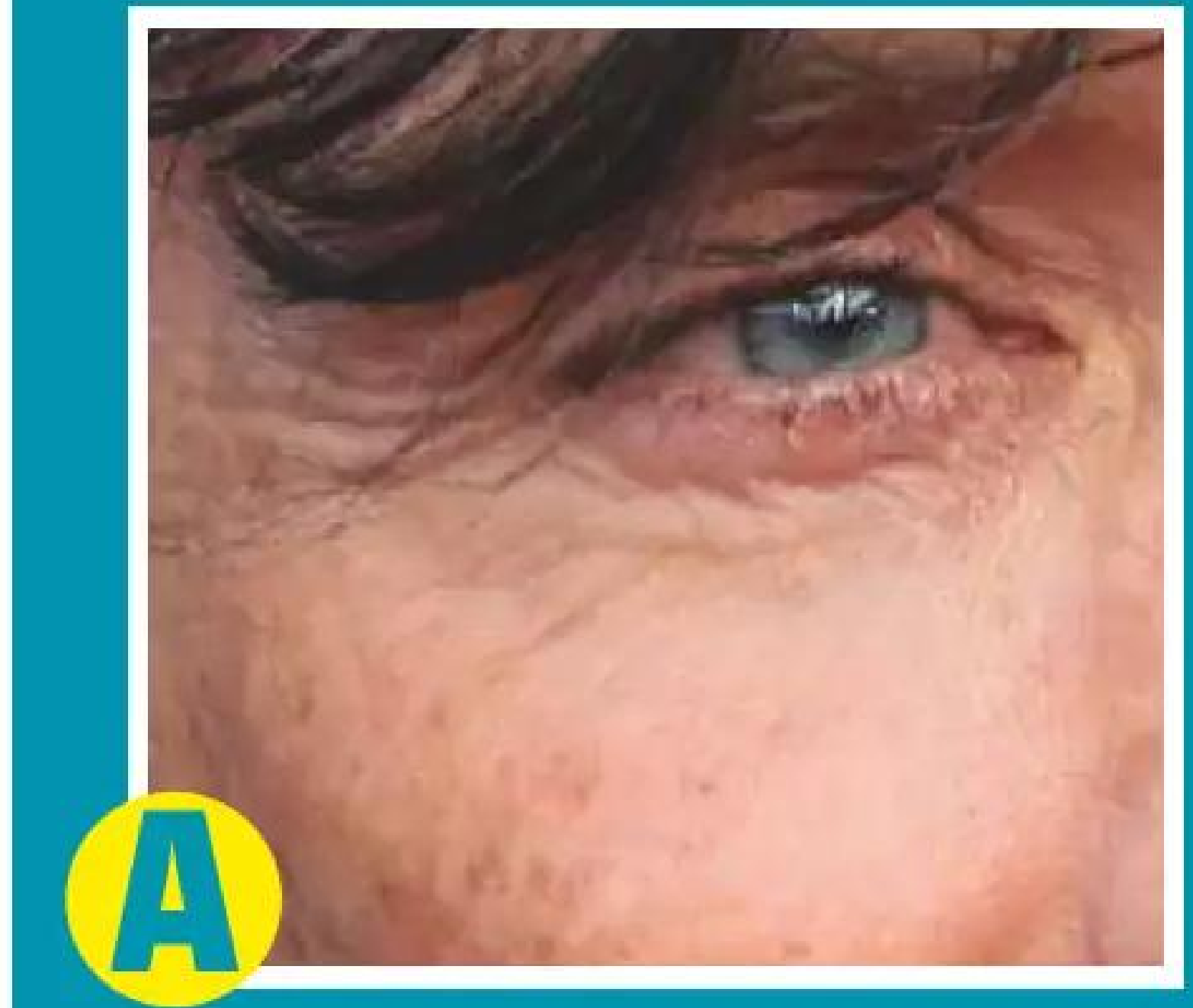
We've taken a completed crossword puzzle and cut it up to give 24 pieces. Your task is to rebuild the puzzle with the help of the piece that we've already placed in the grid.

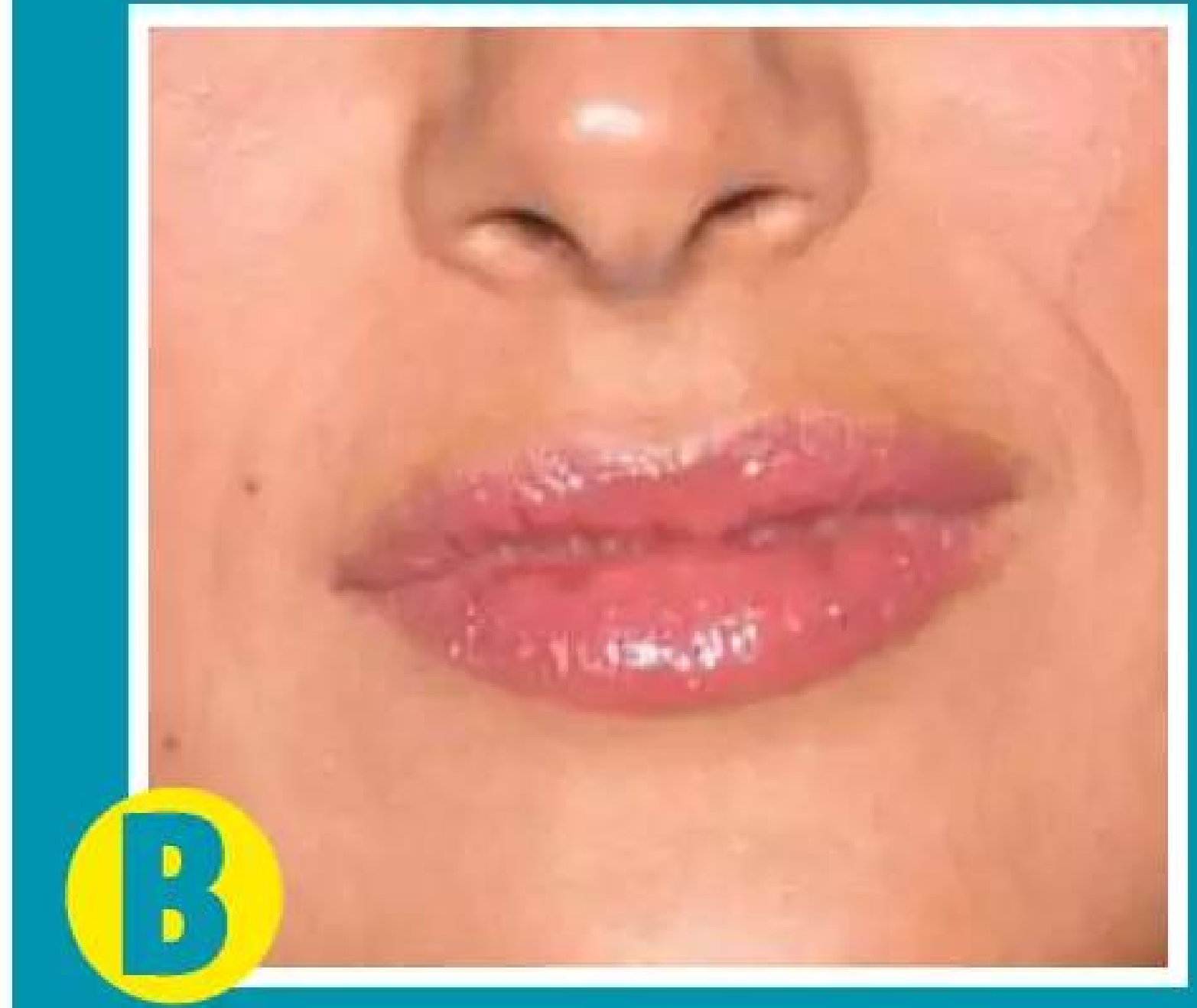


M O V
U ■ A
S I G
■ I ■
B A R
■ L ■
S E N
E ■ S
L L E
G ■ G
R Y E
E ■ N
I C A
■ L ■
D E ■
S P I
I ■ F
N ■ L
■ S O
■ O ■
I C A
■ C ■
E E D
A ■ E
■ ■ ■
R E C
I ■ E
D E L
G ■ L
E R O
L ■ E
■ B R
S ■ ■
M O V
U ■ A
S I G
P E R
A ■ ■
S I G
E ■ L
R E L
■ ■ ■
■ ■ T
C K ■
A ■ R
W E D
■ ■ E
A I R
R I N
■ S ■
I T R
L I D
I ■ W
N C E
O S E
■ P ■
H E E
T E S
A ■ ■
G R I
D ■ A
Y ■ T
L C H
I N G
■ ■ I
N I F
I ■ U
C H E
■ U ■
■ C ■
I T E
■ A ■
T ■ N
E R A
L ■ W

GUESS THE CELEB

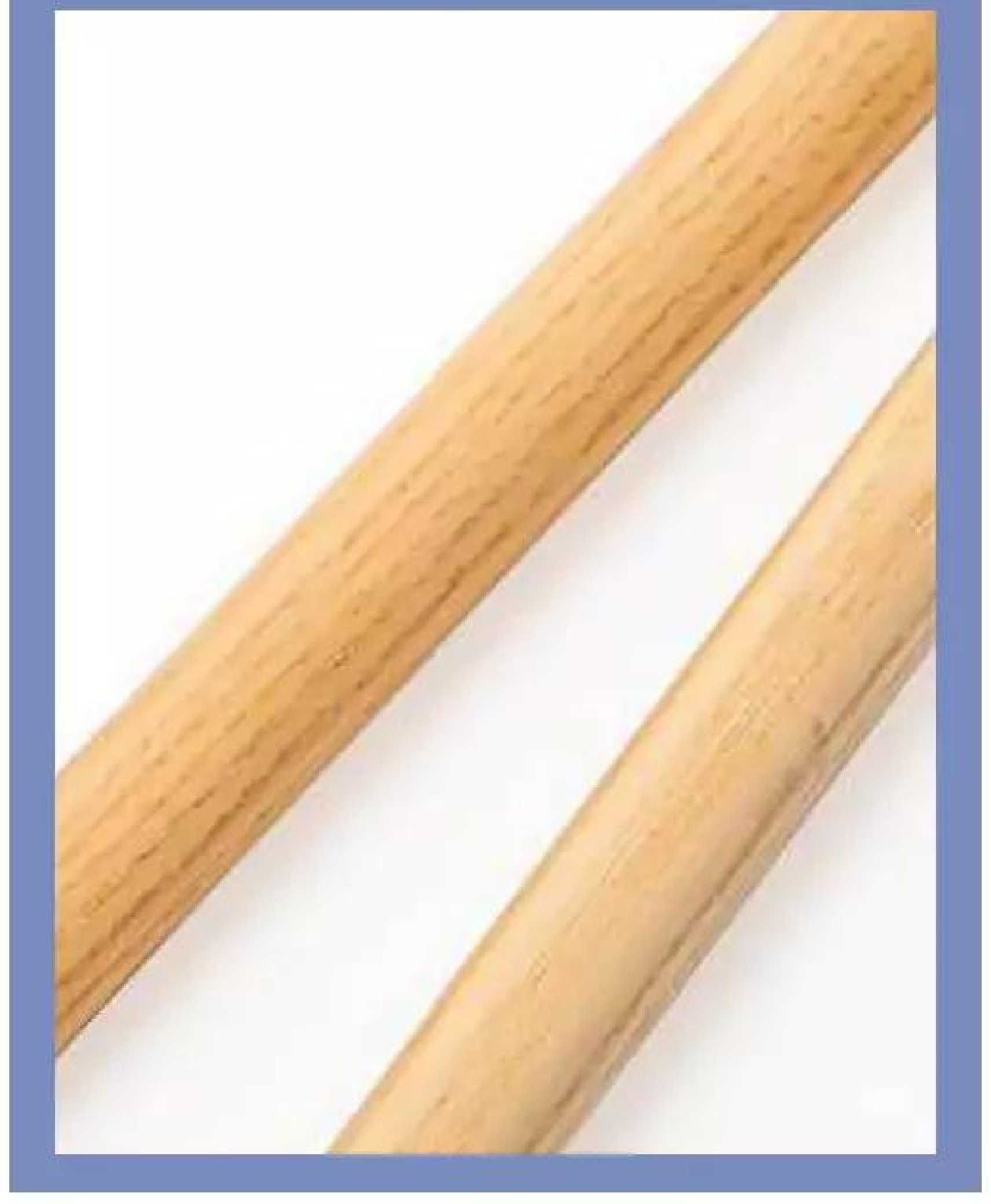
Can you name these stars by seeing close ups of their famous faces?





WHAT ON EARTH?

Can you guess what everyday object this super zoomed in photo shows?



ued...

ROUND SUM

Work out the solution to the sum by following the instructions contained within the arrow.

41
DOUBLE IT
-19
÷9
x8
HALVE IT
+27
÷5
x3
-4
☐

CELEBRITY CODEBREAKER

When you've solved this puzzle, use the code to transfer the letters to the numbered boxes in the lower grid and reveal the identity of our mystery celebrity.

	25		19		9	8	18		12		8 A		9	
25	14	2	2	13	2		3	23	9	15	4 S	10	15	20
	23		26		8		15		23		24 K		1	
4	24	7		23	16	8	10	15	23	6		21	5	19
	2		1		2		2		17		10		15	
15	6	20	5	14						18	23	23	17	7
6			15								17			23
12	14	23	13	2						15	17	9	2	17
2			13								9			2
14	2	11	2	9						17	2	16	15	9
	22		17		26		25		18		14		6	
4	3	7		11	8	14	8	19	23	6		5	4	2
	5		21		22		24		24		8		2	
15	26	11	23	9	15	10	2		2	6	4	5	14	2
	2		25		26		17	2	6		11		10	

~~A~~BCDEFGHIJ
~~K~~LMNOPQR~~S~~
TUVWXYZ

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
			S				A					
14	**15**	**16**	**17**	**18**	**19**	**20**	**21**	**22**	**23**	**24**	**25**	**26**
										K		

19	2	23	14	19	2		20	9	23	23	6	2	7

Pictures Shutterstock

Continued over the page...

Puzzles contin

YULE BE SORRY...

... if you're not on top of things when it comes to Christmas prep! See if this wordsearch, full of festive things to think about, can help you get ahead of the game.

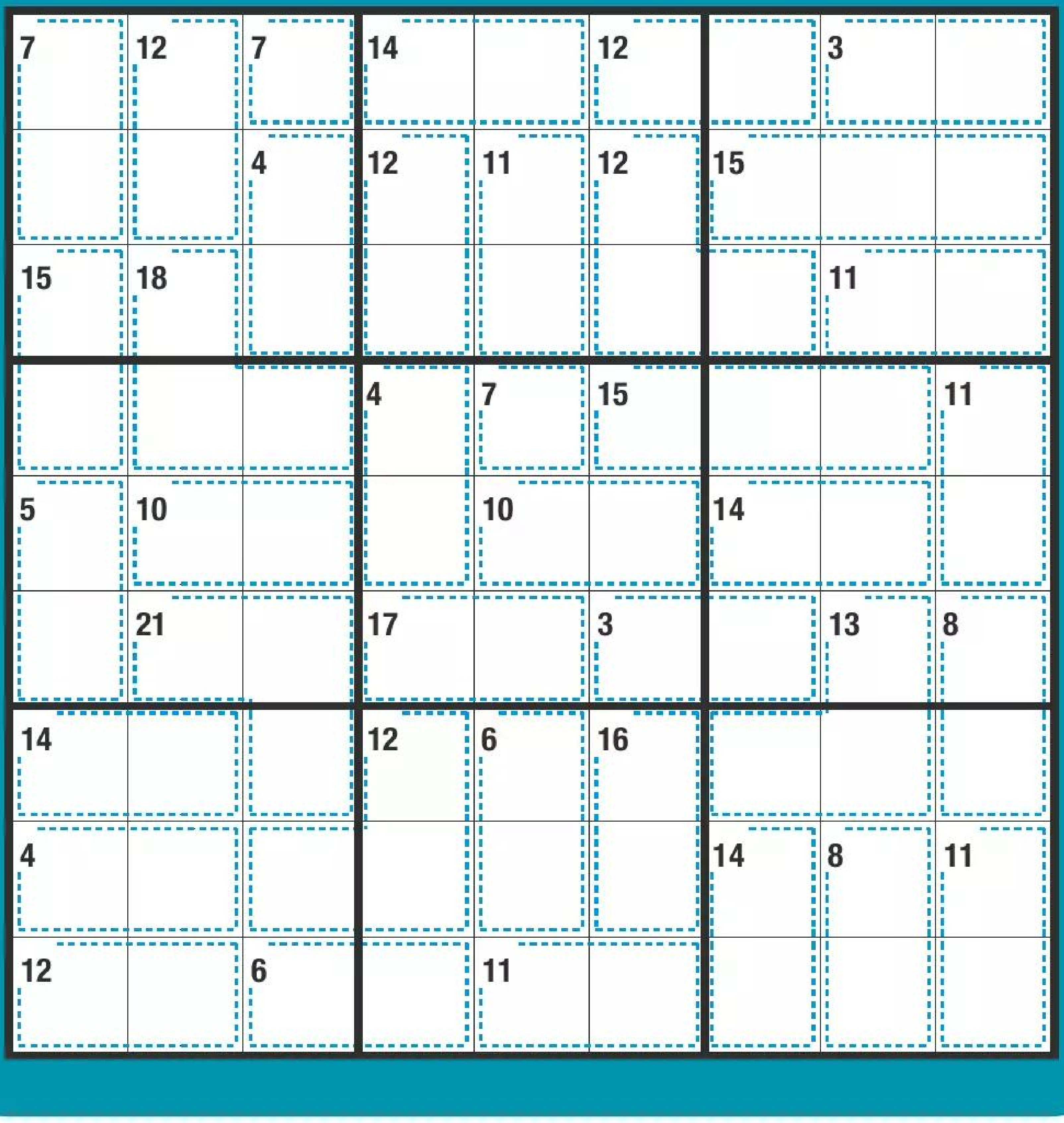
S	S	S	Q	S	C	H	R	I	S	T	M	A	S	J	U	M	P	E	R
T	K	H	N	B	R	P	A	N	T	O	T	I	C	K	E	T	S	A	W
H	C	S	S	O	J	I	A	F	C	T	Q	U	M	A	A	L	D	H	R
G	A	N	E	I	I	H	A	N	G	S	T	O	C	K	I	N	G	S	A
I	N	R	E	I	C	T	K	H	S	T	F	I	G	T	E	G	W	W	L
L	S	N	A	W	S	K	A	P	C	T	M	Z	C	L	R	R	Y	S	X
R	T	W	N	E	T	S	F	R	W	W	I	H	A	X	I	O	R	L	S
O	A	Q	A	G	W	R	E	U	O	I	O	C	F	T	P	E	N	G	J
O	H	X	T	W	Y	Y	E	R	E	C	T	R	E	K	K	Z	N	J	V
D	W	Y	I	V	G	W	T	E	P	N	E	L	R	C	D	I	W	B	S
T	U	L	V	U	F	W	G	R	E	P	I	D	A	O	M	Q	U	O	D
U	W	I	I	E	D	L	E	V	A	S	A	R	P	M	B	D	T	O	R
O	D	M	T	H	G	P	D	P	T	P	C	R	I	G	M	H	O	K	A
G	I	A	Y	E	N	A	Y	S	E	N	D	R	W	C	S	R	N	T	C
H	R	F	T	Q	Q	U	P	U	L	E	T	W	T	J	W	P	R	I	T
M	Y	T	I	Q	B	E	S	A	Y	W	L	K	O	R	C	J	G	M	S
G	N	I	M	O	C	S	O	H	W	N	Q	V	E	R	Y	O	D	E	O
F	I	S	E	P	P	N	Q	U	C	O	S	A	E	A	K	L	Z	O	P
G	N	I	P	P	O	H	S	O	G	F	T	J	A	G	I	D	Z	F	O
O	I	V	Y	E	K	R	U	T	E	H	T	R	E	D	R	O	O	F	U

ADVENT CALENDAR
BOOK TIME OFF
BORROW CHAIRS
BUY PAPER
CHRISTMAS JUMPER
CRACKERS
DECORATIONS
DOOR WREATH
GET GIFTS
GO SHOPPING
HANG STOCKINGS
NATIVITY TIME
NEW TREE
ORDER THE TURKEY
OUTDOOR LIGHTS
PANTO TICKETS
PARTY WEAR
PEEL VEG
POST CARDS
TRIMMINGS
VISIT FAMILY
WHAT SNACKS?
WHO'S COMING?
WORK DO
WRAP PRESSIES
WRITE LISTS

ued...

KILLER SUDOKU

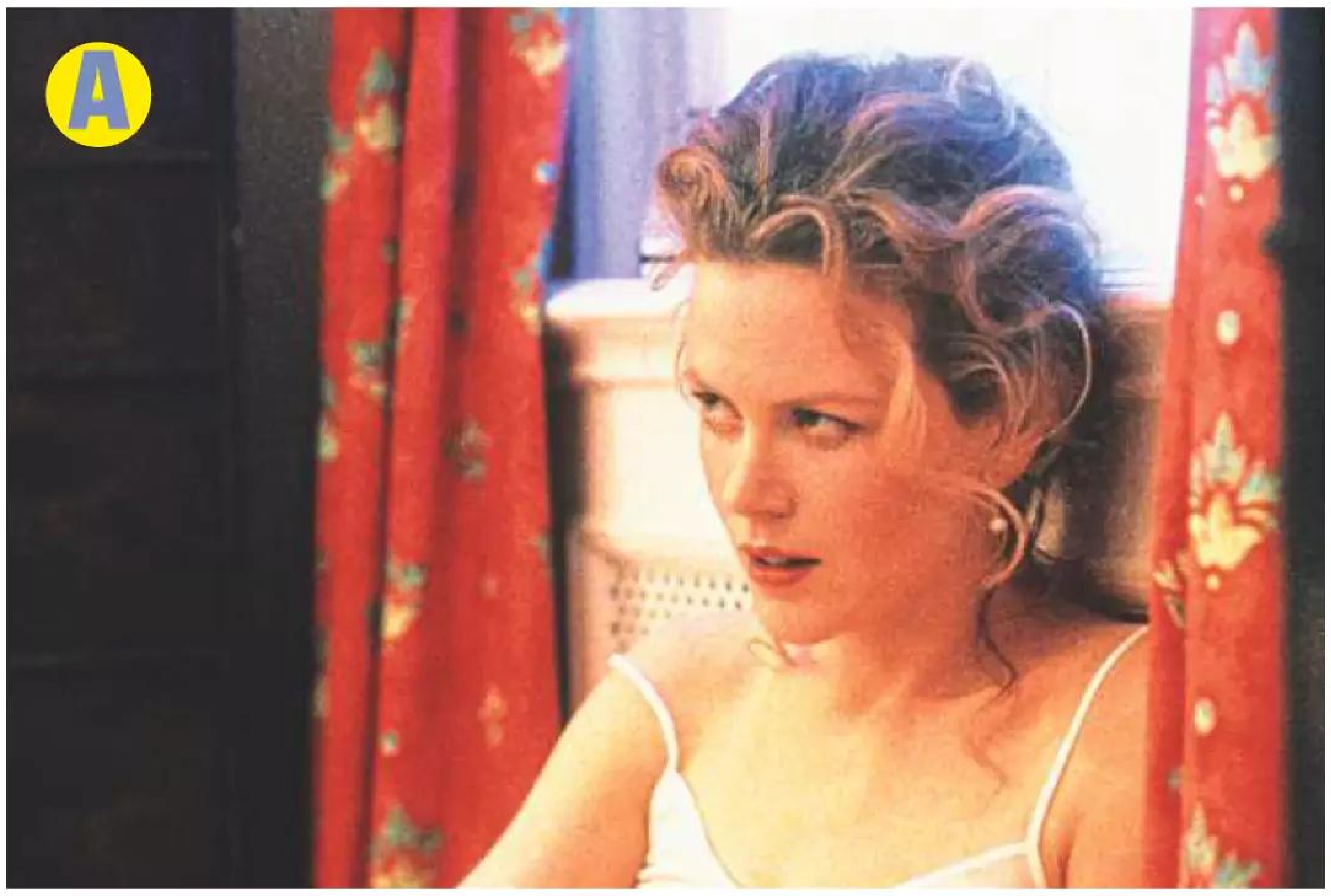
Killer Sudoku is based on the traditional sudoku grid and every column, every row and every 3x3 box must contain the digits 1 to 9. But there's a twist – the dotted squares must be filled with numbers that add up to that in the left corner.

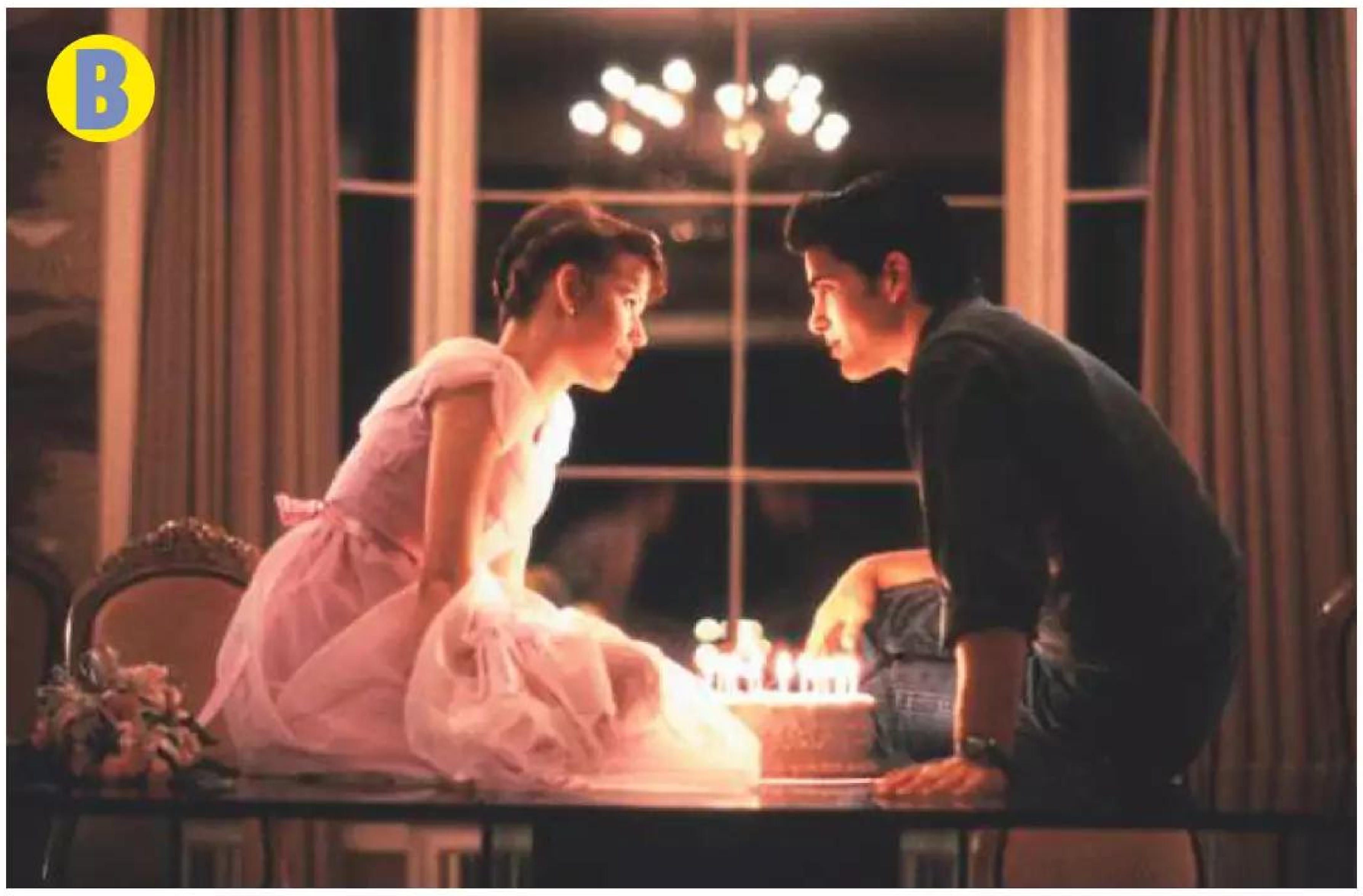


7	12	7	14		12		3	
		4	12	11	12	15		
15	18						11	
			4	7	15			11
5	10			10		14		
	21		17		3		13	8
14			12	6	16			
4						14	8	11
12		6		11				

GUESS THE MOVIE

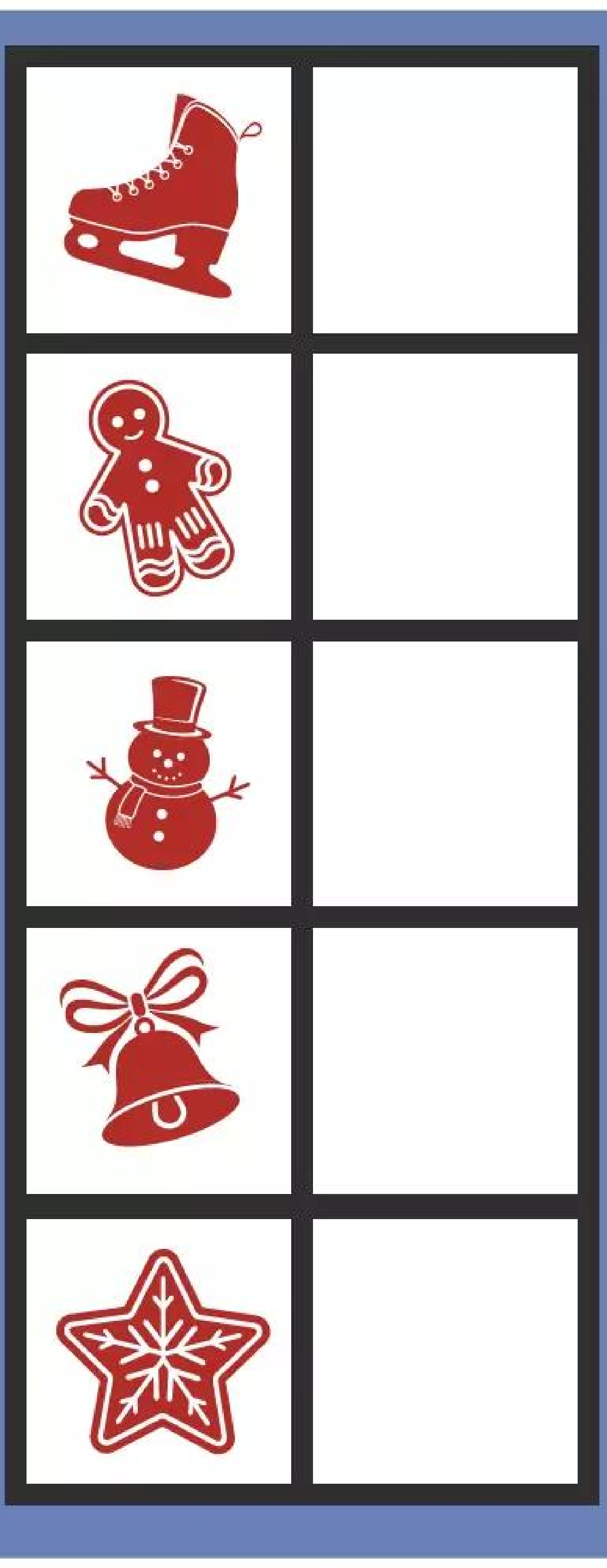
Can you name these famous films from looking at just one scene?

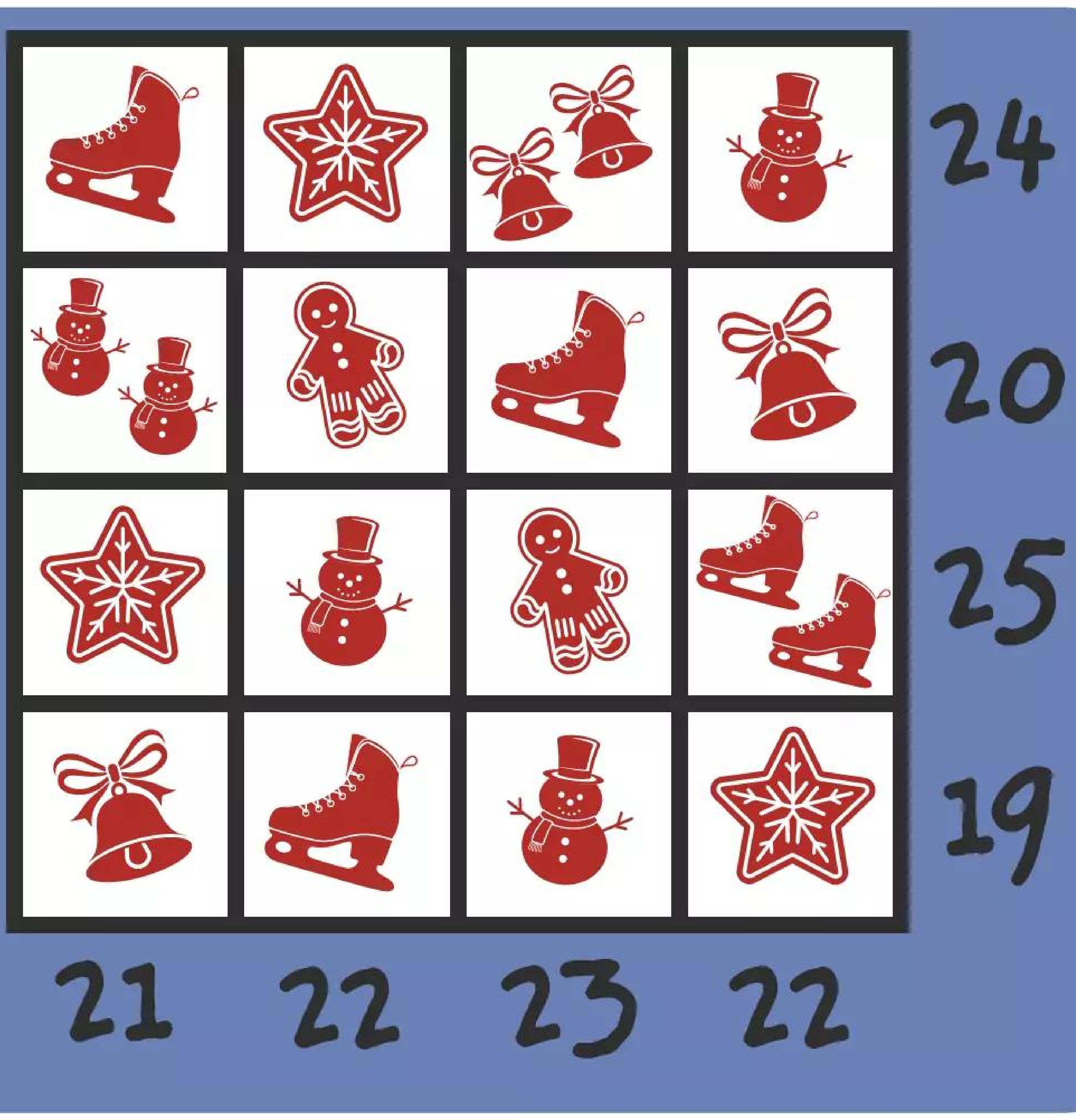




TOTAL-LY PUZZLED

In this puzzle, each symbol stands for a whole number between one and nine. The number at the end of each row and column equals the sum of the numbers in it. When a symbol appears twice in a square it is doubled. Can you work out which number each symbol represents?





Pictures Shutterstock

*NB for Prize Puzzles information, see page 75

Continued over the page...

Puzzles

CAUTION
Some questions contain dangerous levels of difficulty!

SMART METER

Are you a bit of a quiz whizz? Pit your wits against the mixed bag of posers below and see how you get on...

POT LUCK

1 Millie Bobby Brown, David Harbour and Winona Ryder return to the fictional town of Hawkins, Indiana, to star in the final season of which sci-fi horror series on Netflix later this month?

2 In Roman mythology, how many ‘labours’ did Hercules perform?

3 What colour is the letter E in the Google logo?

4 Clafoutis is a fruit flan, typically made using cherries, that originated in what country?

4

WINTER

5 Alex Winter and Keanu Reeves have played which time-travelling twosome in three ‘excellent’ and ‘bodacious’ sci-fi comedy films?

6 On what date will the winter solstice occur in the Northern Hemisphere this year?

7 Ski mountaineering will make its debut as an event at the Winter Olympics in 2026, to be hosted by which country?

8 The Winter Palace is a former imperial residence in which Russian city?

7

PANTO

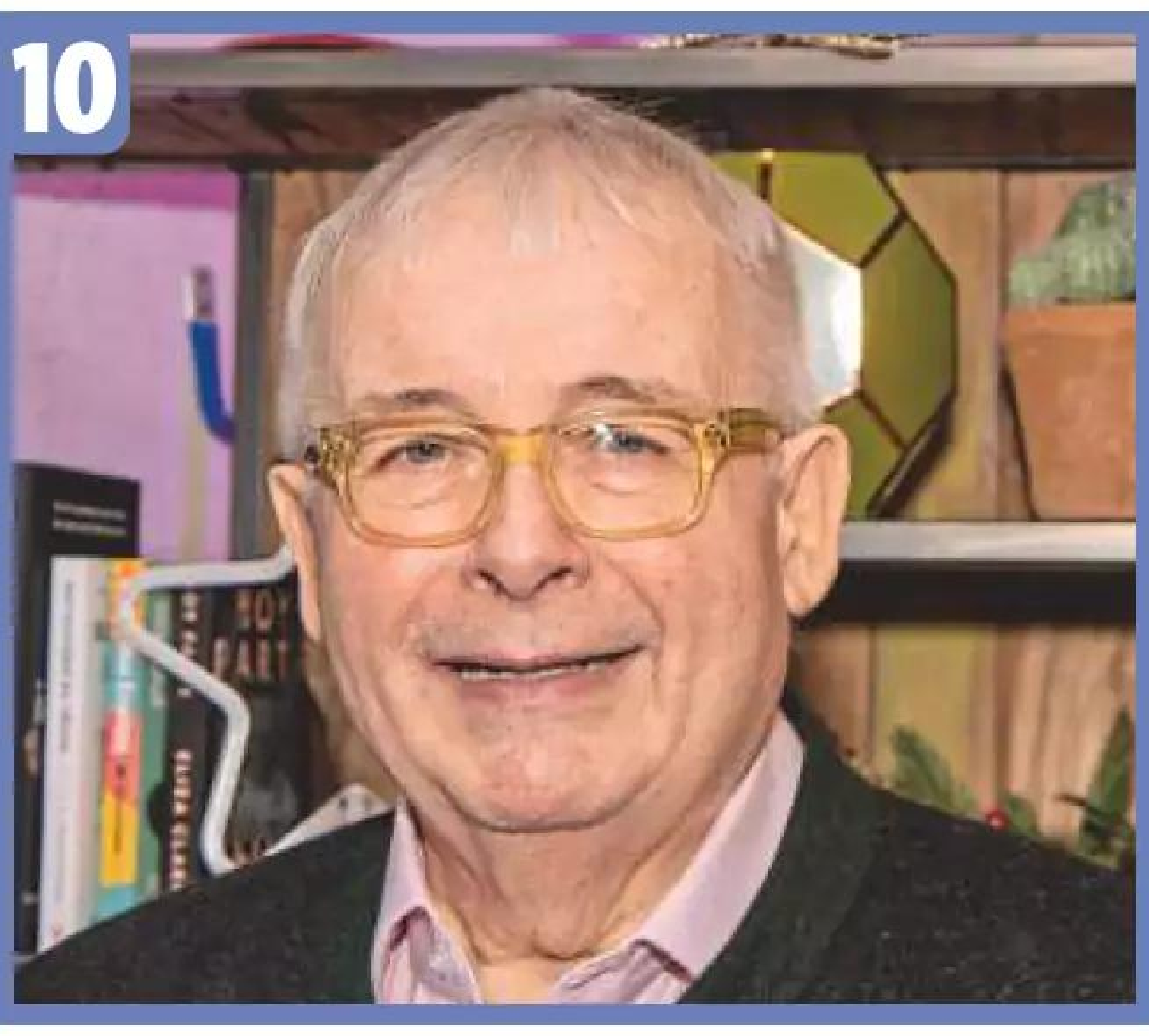
9 In panto land, who lives with his mother Widow Twankey and his brother Wishee Washee?

10 Panto royalty Christopher Biggins will play King Richard, alongside Faye Tozer as Maid Marion and Gok Wan as Gok Scarlet, in which festive show, playing at the Birmingham Hippodrome from December?

11 Who will be taking a break from quizzing duties on *The Chase* to star as Wicked Fairy Carabosse in *Sleeping Beauty* at the Wyvern Theatre in Swindon?

12 Which famous West End theatre will host its tenth panto this year, with returning regulars Paul Zerdin, Nigel Havers and Julian Clary?

10



CHRISTMAS... ISH

13 Christmas Island is an external territory of Australia, lying over 200 miles to the south of Java in which ocean?

14 True or false: *Angels* was Robbie Williams’ first UK no 1 as a solo artist.

15 Back in 2005, which celebrity chef campaigned against Turkey Twizzlers, as part of his ‘Feed Me Better’ initiative, aimed at improving school dinners?

16 Santa Fe is the capital of which US state?

14

BELLS

17 *I Can Hear The Bells* and *Good Morning Baltimore* are songs that feature in which musical?

18 Alexander Graham Bell, the man credited with the invention of the telephone, was born in what country?

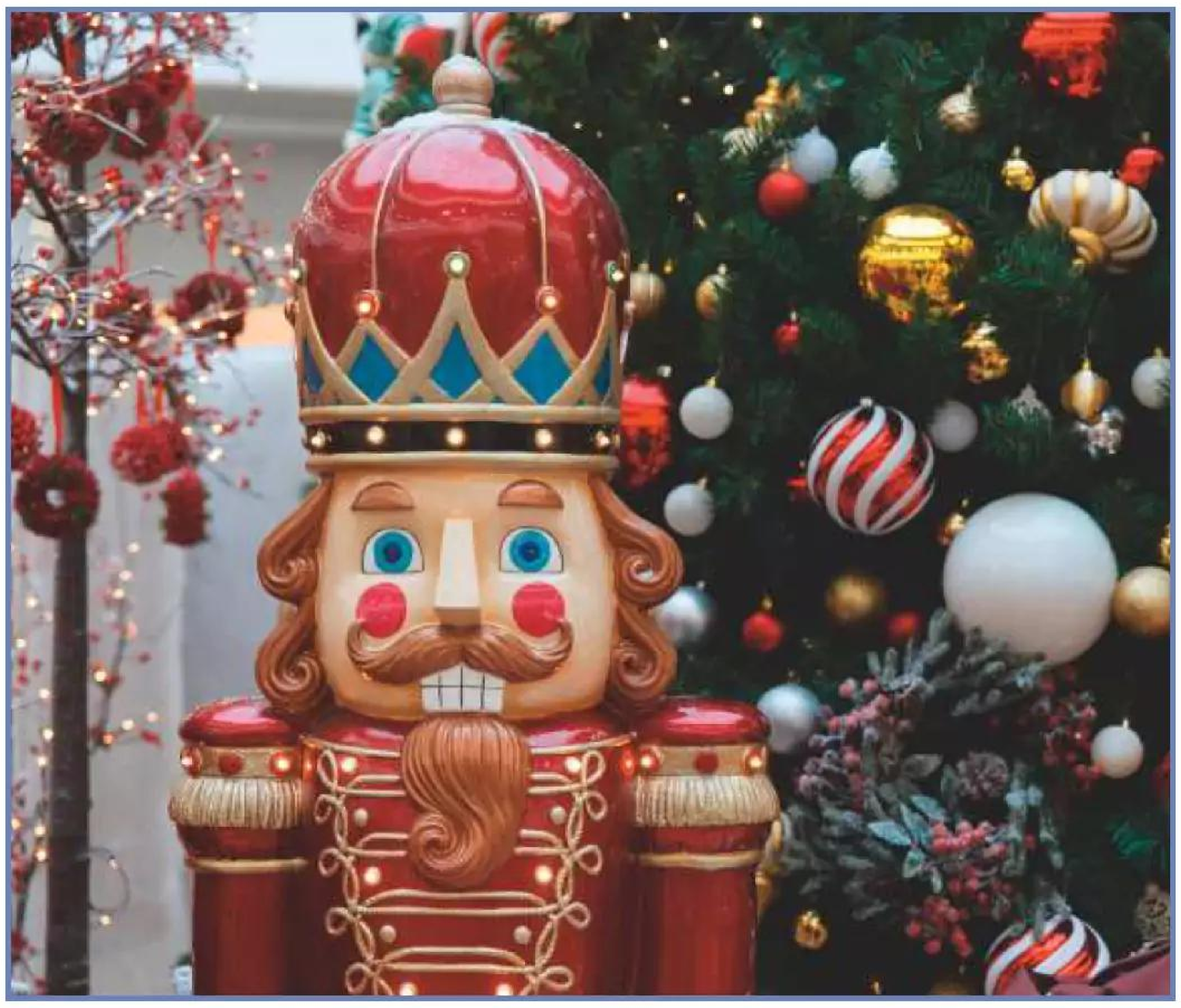
19 Who wrote the classic novel *For Whom The Bell Tolls*?

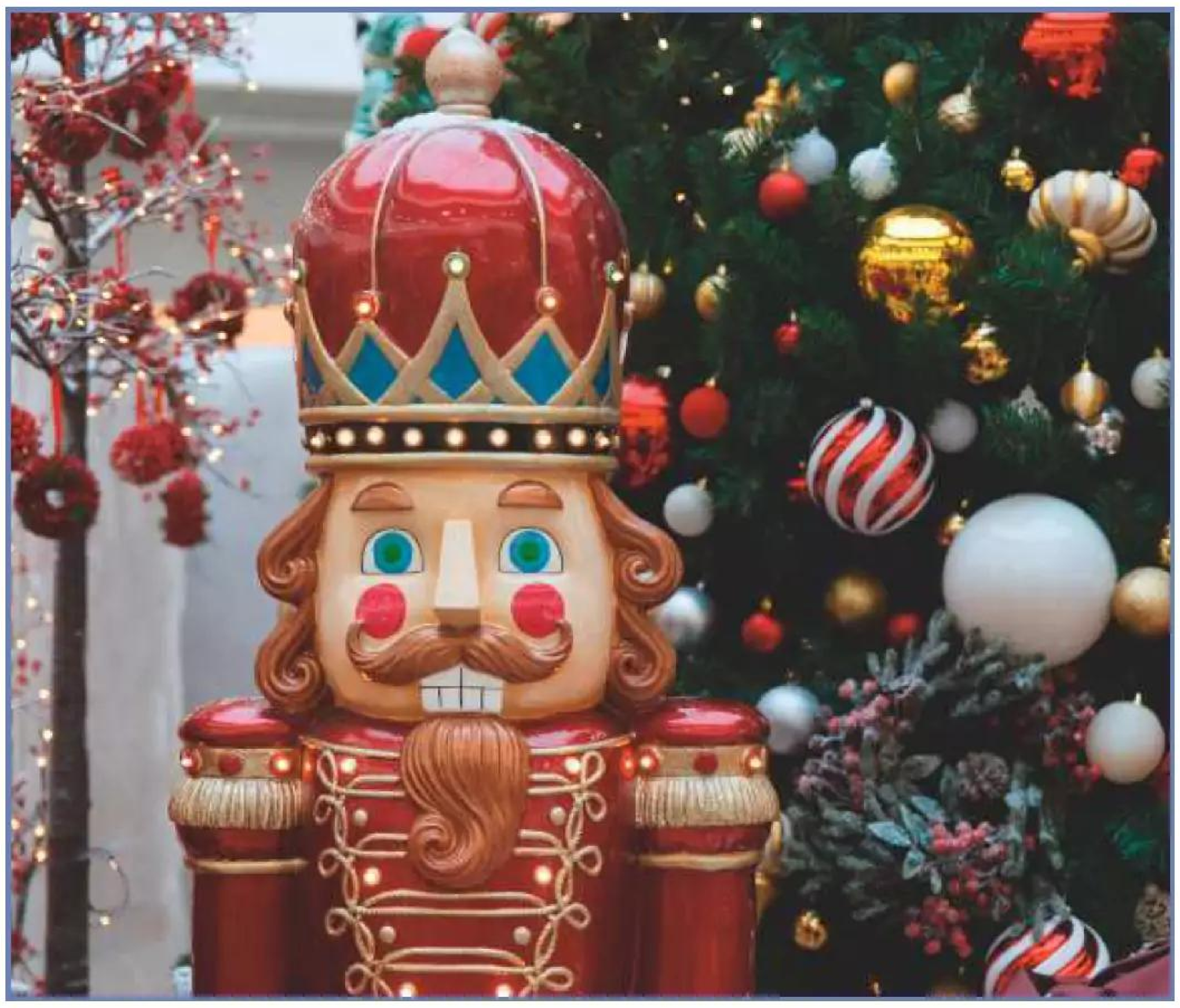
20 Which Spice Girl has a daughter called Bluebell Madonna?

20

SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

Can you spot eight differences between these festive photos?





THIS WEEK'S SOLUTIONS

BITS & PIECES

M	O	V	I	N	G		S	O	L	I	D
U		A			I		O		I		W
S	I	G	N	I	F	I	C	A	N	C	E
I		U			T		I		E		L
C	H	E	C	K		B	A	R	R	E	L
	U		A		R		L				
P	E	R	S	P	I	R	I	N	G		G
A			I		F		S		R	Y	E
S	I	G	N		L	I	T	R	E		N
T		N	O	S	E	D		A	W	E	D
E	R	A		P		Y		T			E
L		W	H	E	E	L	C	H	A	I	R
				C		L		E		C	
R	E	C	I	T	E		B	R	E	E	D
I		E		A		S			A		E
D	E	L	I	C	A	T	E	S	S	E	N
G		L		L		A			E		S
E	R	O	D	E		G	R	I	L	L	E

GUESS THE CELEB

A Cillian Murphy
B Salma Hayek

WHAT ON EARTH?

Drumstick

ROUND SUM

29

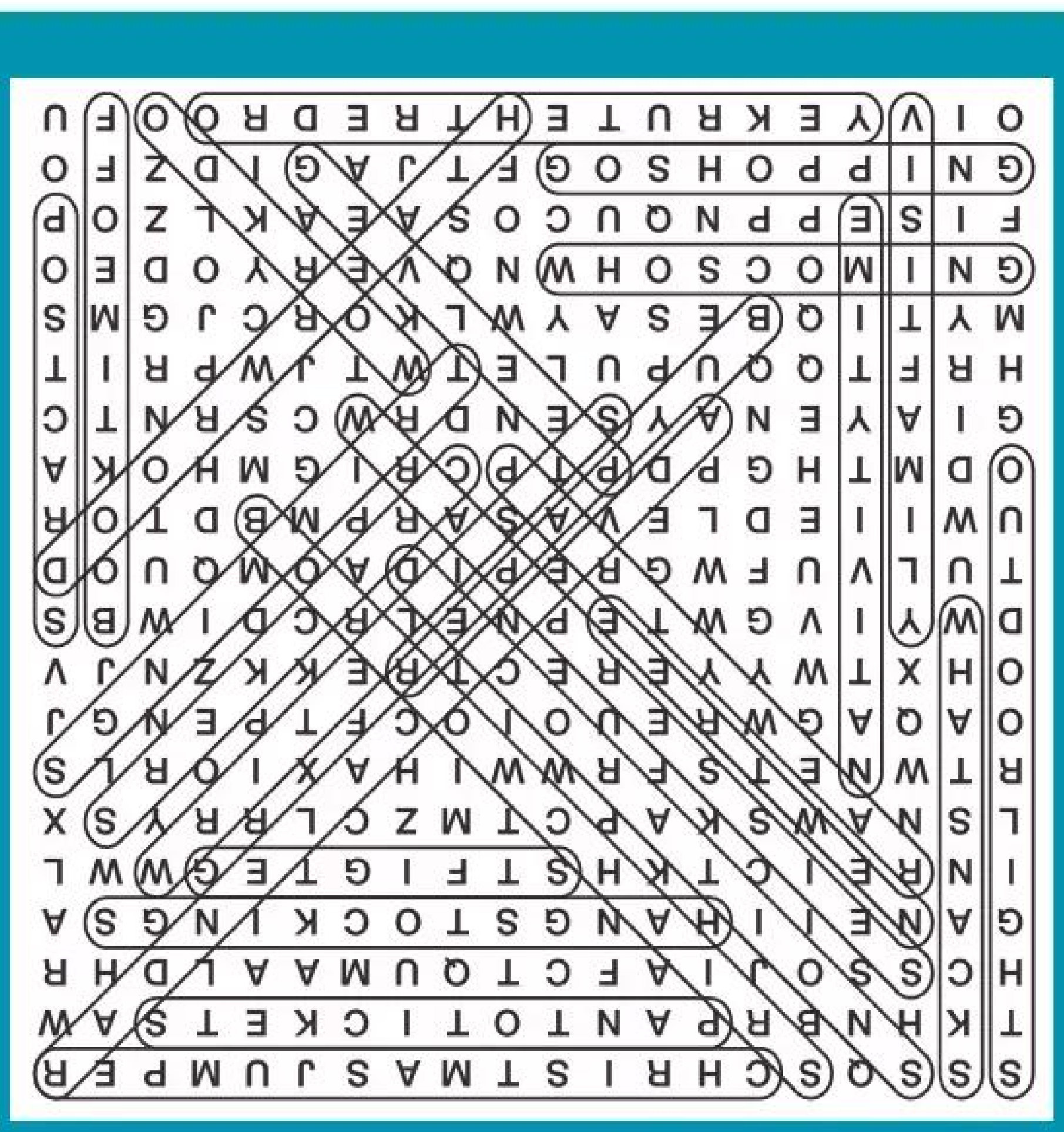
CELEBRITY CODEBREAKER

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Q	E	H	S	U	N	Y	A	L	T	P	F	Z
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
R	I	V	D	W	G	C	J	X	O	K	B	M

	B		G		L	A	W		F		A		L	
B	R	E	E	Z	E		H	O	L	I	S	T	I	C
	O		M		A		I		O		K		Q	
S	K	Y		O	V	A	T	I	O	N		J	U	G
	E		Q		E		E		D		T		I	
I	N	C	U	R						W	O	O	D	Y
N			I								D			O
F	R	O	Z	E						I	D	L	E	D
E			Z								L			E
R	E	P	E	L						D	E	V	I	L
	X		D		M		B		W		R		N	
S	H	Y		P	A	R	A	G	O	N		U	S	E
	U		J		X		K		K		A		E	
I	M	P	O	L	I	T	E		E	N	S	U	R	E
	E		B		M		D	E	N		P		T	

Celebrity George Clooney

WORDSEARCH



S	S	S	Q	S	C	H	R	I	S	T	M	A	S	J	U	M	P	E	R
T	K	H	N	B	R	P	A	N	T	O	T	I	C	K	E	T	S	A	W
H	C	S	S	O	J	I	A	F	C	T	Q	U	M	A	A	L	D	H	R
G	A	N	E	I	I	H	A	N	G	S	T	O	C	K	I	N	G	S	A
I	N	R	E	I	C	T	K	H	S	T	F	I	G	T	E	G	W	W	L
L	S	N	A	W	S	K	A	P	C	T	M	Z	C	L	R	R	Y	S	X
R	T	W	N	E	T	S	F	R	W	W	I	H	A	X	I	O	R	L	S
O	A	Q	A	G	W	R	E	U	O	I	O	C	F	T	P	E	N	G	J
O	H	X	T	W	Y	Y	E	R	E	C	T	R	E	K	K	Z	N	J	V
D	W	Y	I	V	G	W	T	E	P	N	E	L	R	C	D	I	W	B	S
T	U	L	V	U	F	W	G	R	E	P	I	D	A	O	M	Q	U	O	D
U	W	I	I	E	D	L	E	V	A	S	A	R	P	M	B	D	T	O	R
O	D	M	T	H	G	P	D	P	T	P	C	R	I	G	M	H	O	K	A
G	I	A	Y	E	N	A	Y	S	E	N	D	R	W	C	S	R	N	T	C
H	R	F	T	Q	Q	U	P	U	L	E	T	W	T	J	W	P	R	I	T
M	Y	T	I	Q	B	E	S	A	Y	W	L	K	O	R	C	J	G	M	S
G	N	I	M	O	C	S	O	H	W	N	Q	V	E	R	Y	O	D	E	O
F	I	S	E	P	P	N	Q	U	C	O	S	A	E	A	K	L	Z	O	P
G	N	I	P	P	O	H	S	O	G	F	T	J	A	G	I	D	Z	F	O
O	I	V	Y	E	K	R	U	T	E	H	T	R	E	D	R	O	O	F	U

KILLER SUDOKU

5	4	7	8	6	3	9	2	1
2	8	3	7	9	1	4	5	6
6	9	1	5	2	4	7	3	8
9	3	6	1	7	5	2	8	4
1	2	8	3	4	6	5	9	7
4	7	5	9	8	2	1	6	3
8	6	9	2	1	7	3	4	5
3	1	4	6	5	9	8	7	2
7	5	2	4	3	8	6	1	9

GUESS THE MOVIE

A Eyes Wide Shut
B Sixteen Candles

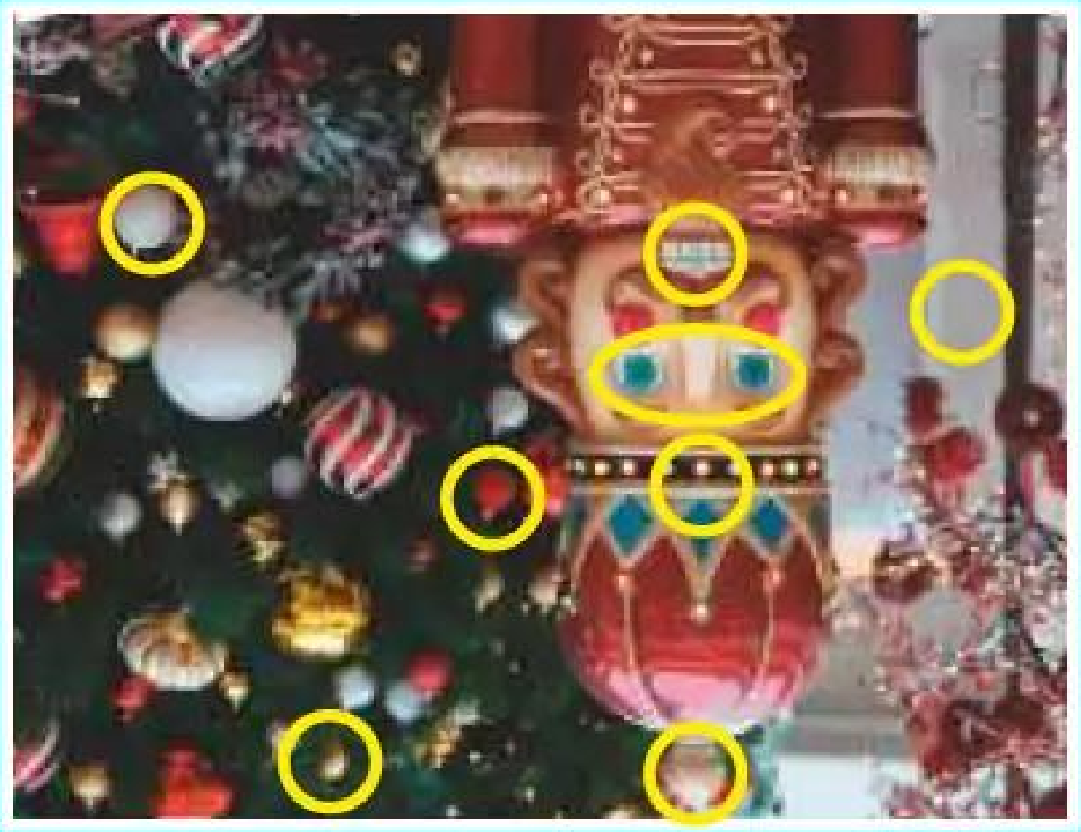
TOTAL-LY PUZZLED

★=9
🍪=8
⛄=2
🔔=5
⛸=3

SMART METER

1 Stranger Things,
2 12,
3 Red,
4 France,
5 Bill & Ted,
6 21 December,
7 Italy,
8 St Petersburg,
9 Aladdin,
10 Robin Hood,
11 Jenny 'the Vixen' Ryan,
12 London Palladium,
13 Indian,
14 False (his first solo no 1 was Millennium),
15 Jamie Oliver,
16 New Mexico,
17 Hairspray,
18 Scotland,
19 Ernest Hemingway,
20 Geri Halliwell.

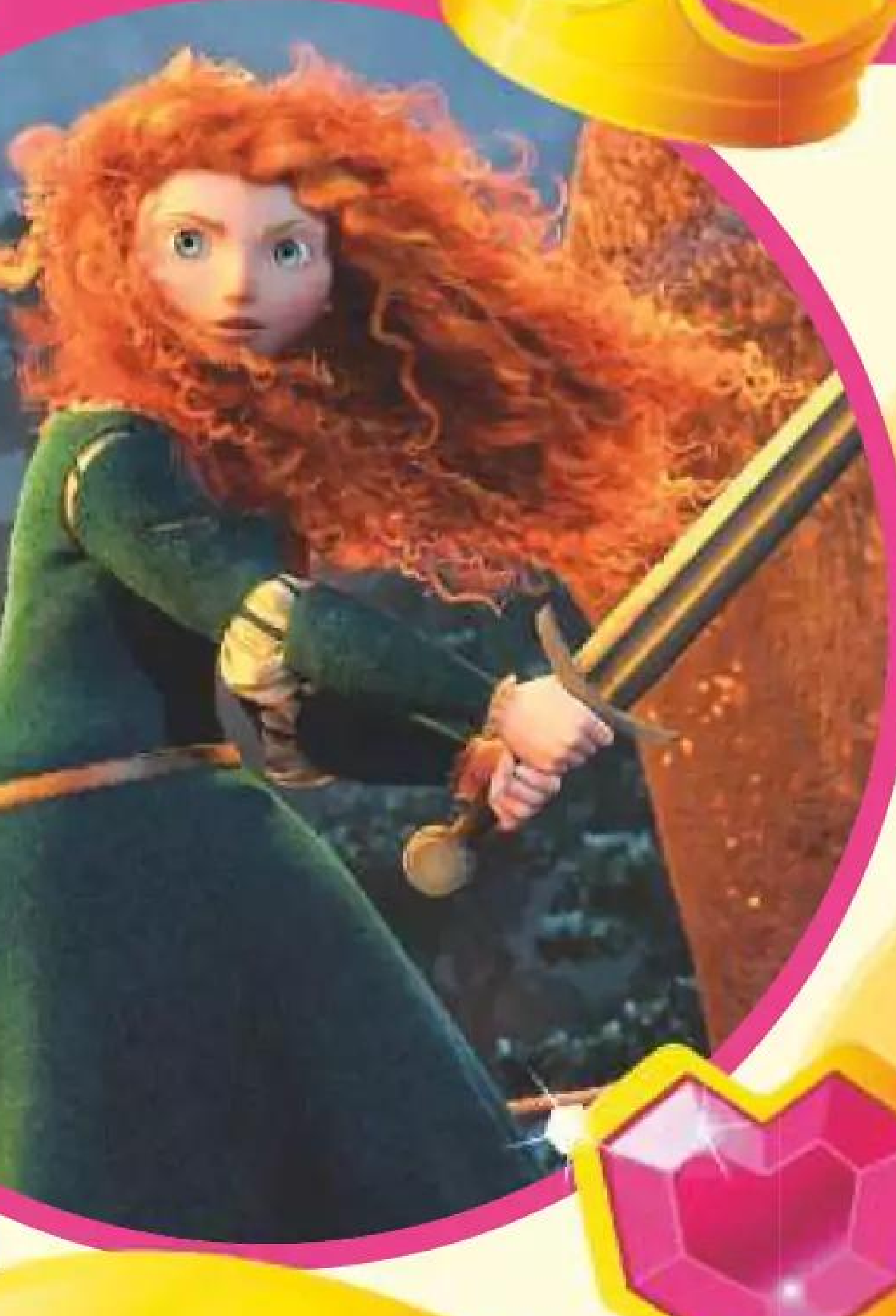
SPOT THE DIFFERENCE



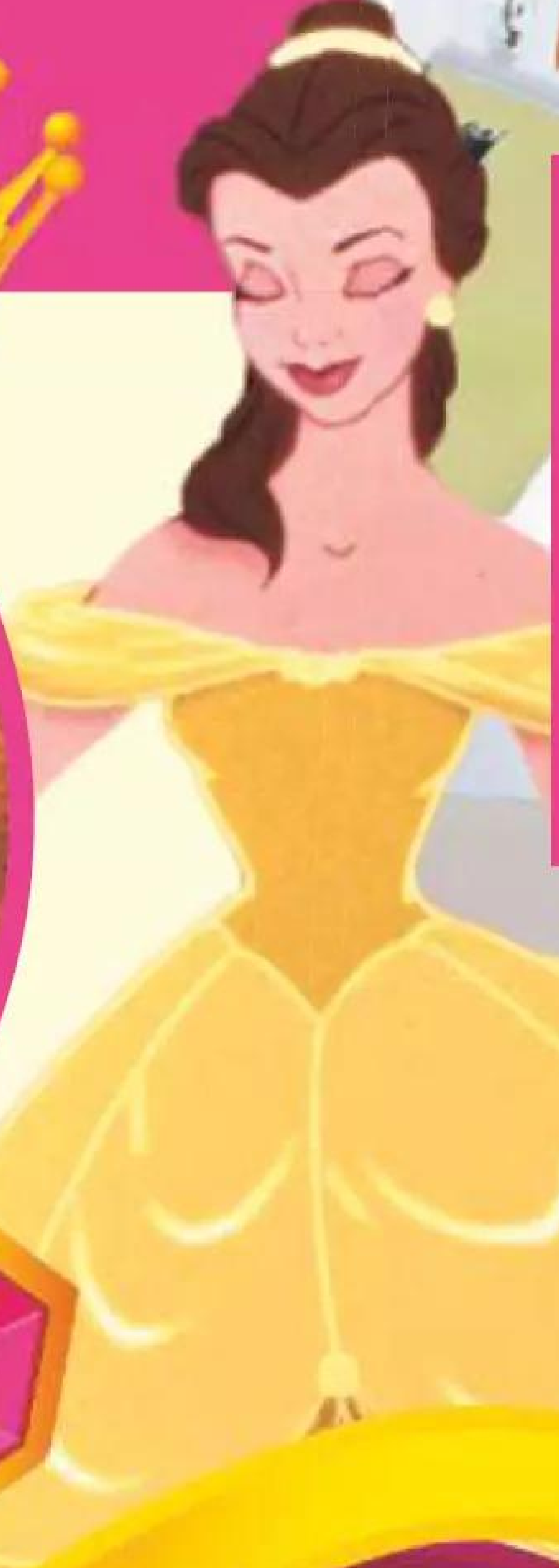
Pictures Shutterstock

REAL LIFE PRINCESS!

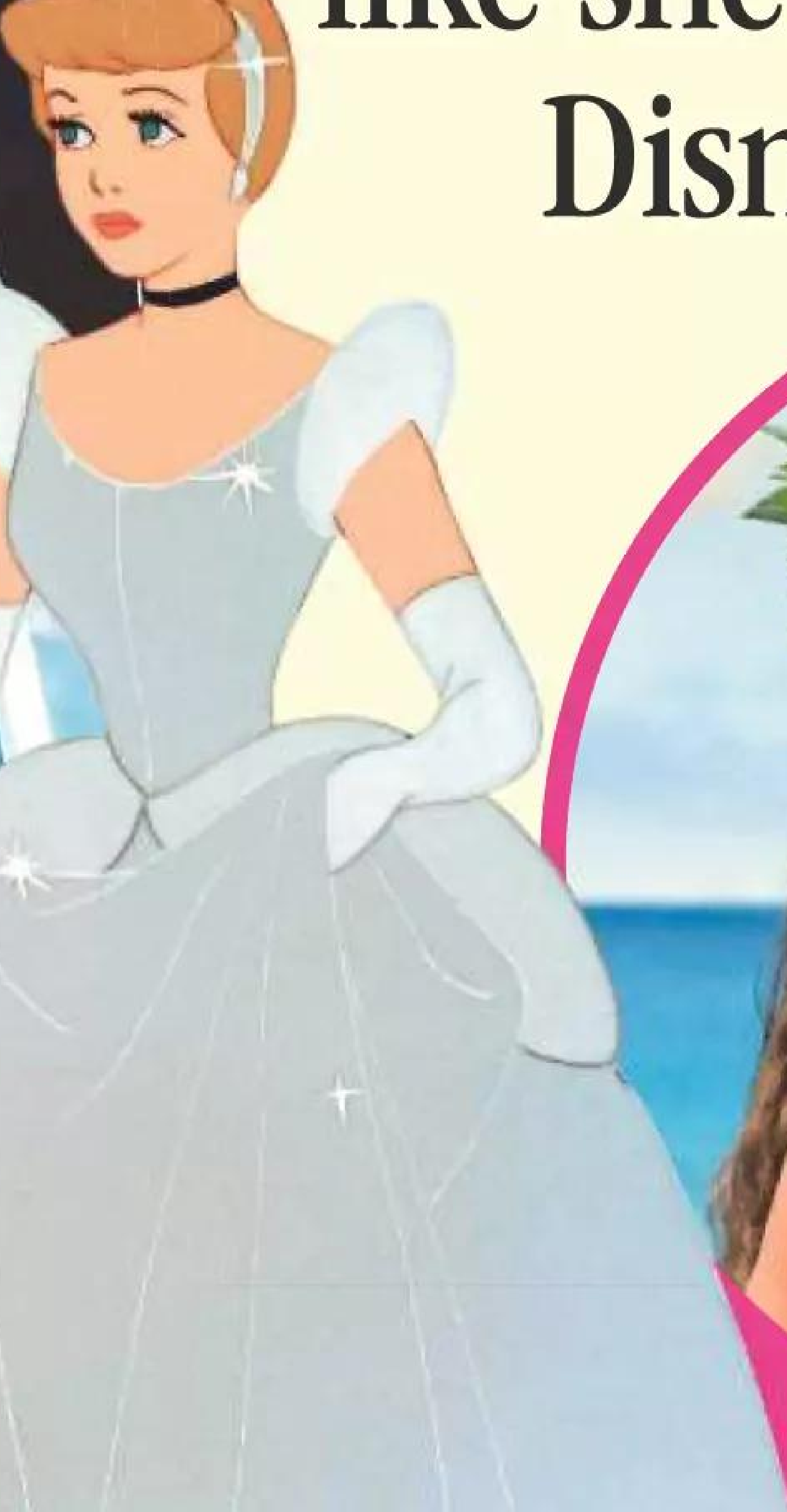
All the times Kate Middleton has looked like she belongs in Disneyland



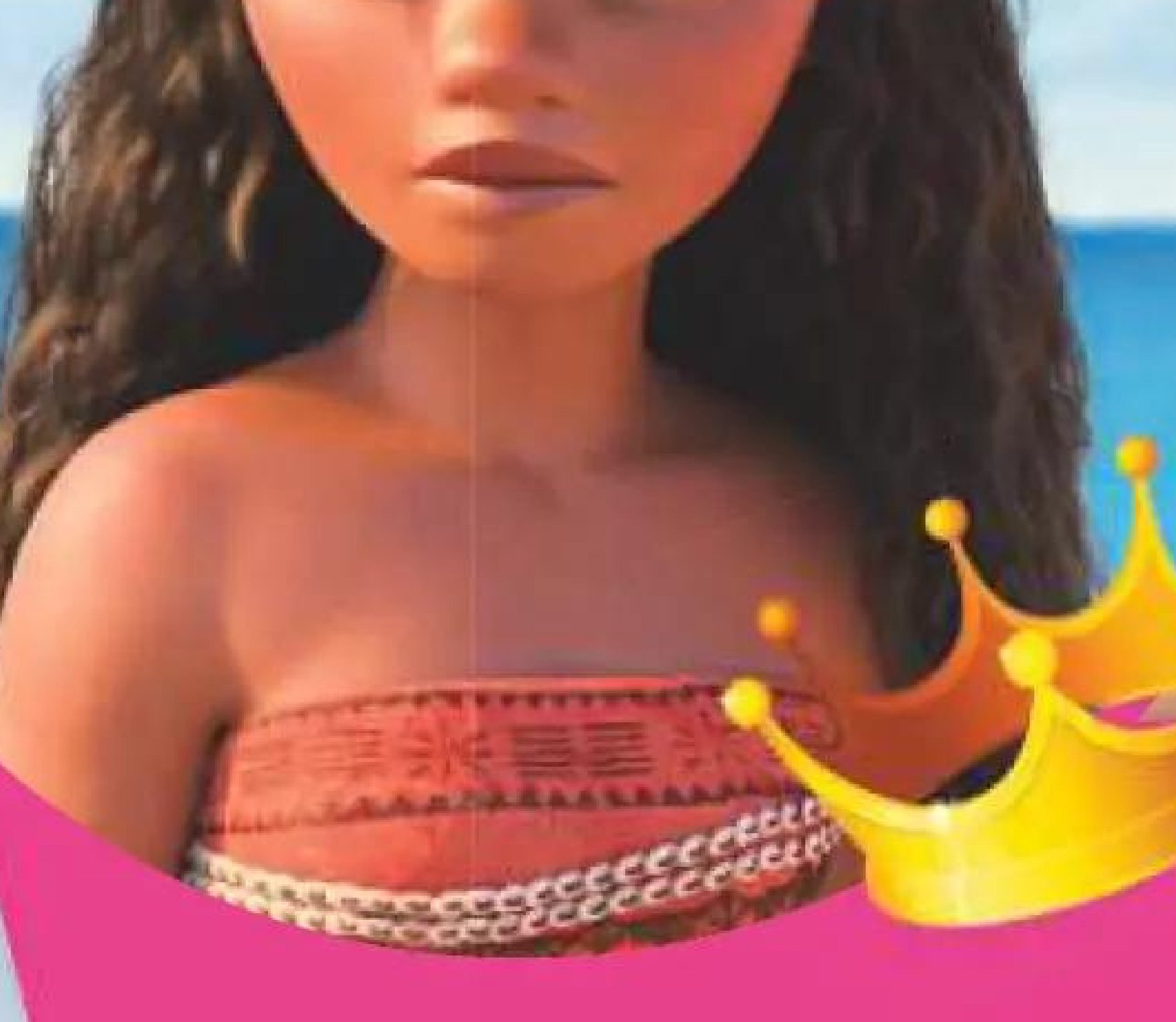
PRINCESS MERIDA
She's shown how *Brave* she is in recent years, and dressed like Princess Merida in 2020.



PRINCESS BELLE
Always the Belle of the ball, Kate is giving *Beauty and the Beast* energy.

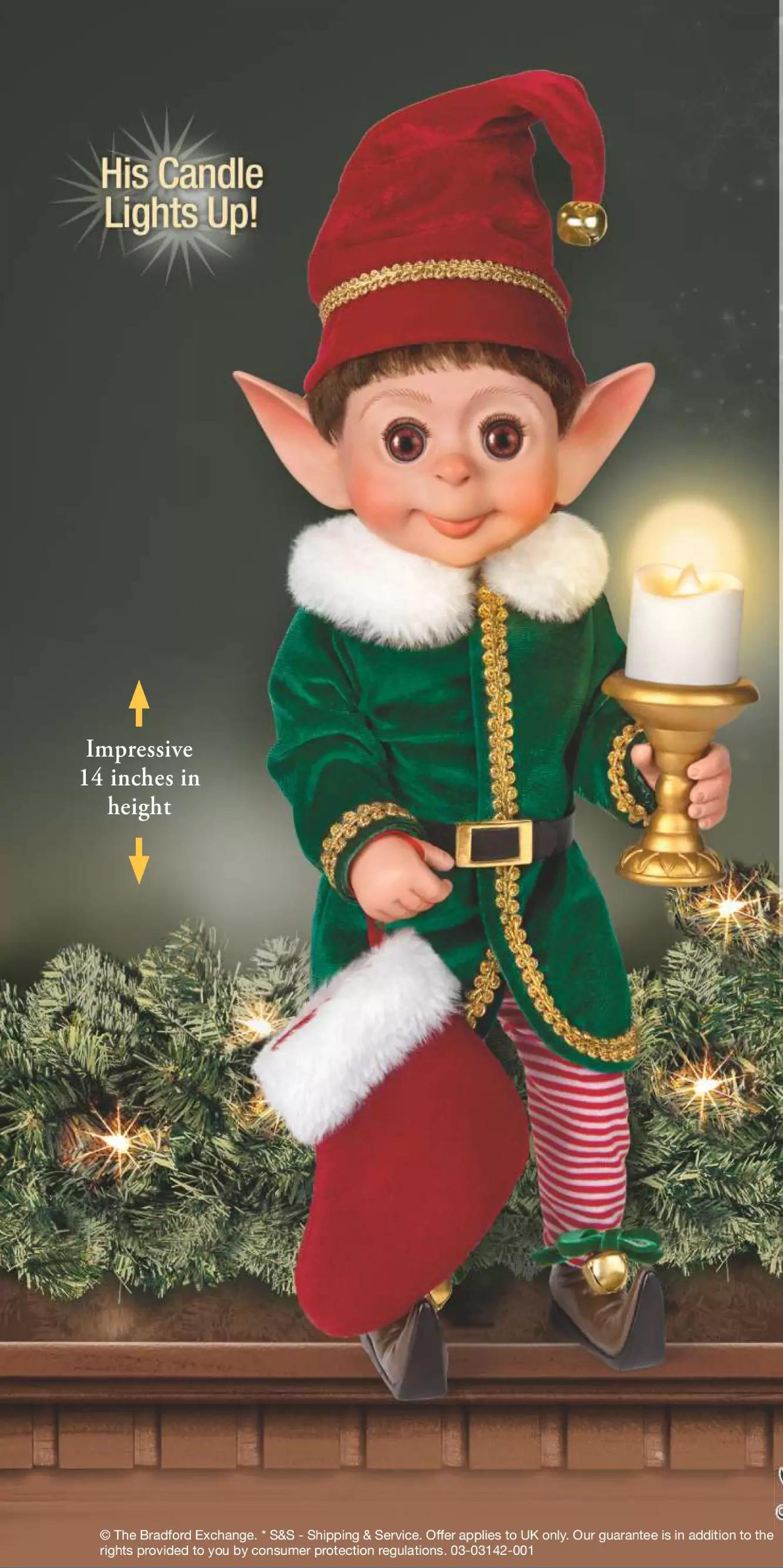


CINDERELLA
The Princess of Wales channelled her inner Cinderella in 2022 – complete with glass slipper!



MOANA
On a trip to Tuvalu in 2012, Kate looked similar to Disney's Princess of the Sea, Moana.

By Samuel McManus, **Pictures** Getty Images, Alamy



Santa's #1 Helper

Charlie the Christmas Elf

Collector's Edition Doll

An Ashton-Drake Exclusive

*

Expertly sculpted, with fine fabric costuming

*

Includes candle, story card with preparation checklist, and stocking!

It's Christmas Eve. The lights have been dimmed, and the family's settled their minds for a long winter's nap. So how does Santa find his way to the stockings and cookies? *Charlie*! Each year, by candlelight, this magical elf checks off his list, making sure everything in your home is just right for Santa's visit. Then, when the big night arrives, he serves as St. Nick's special guide, showing him to the stockings, the cookies, and, of course, the tree!

Sculpted by master artist Ina Volprich, *Charlie the Christmas Elf* stands an impressive 14" tall, is crafted from high-quality, handpainted artist's vinyl, and features lifelike inset eyes. His costume boasts layers of fabric accented by golden trim, a belt, and bells on his hat and shoes. Place him on your mantle, enchant your children or grandchildren with his included story card with a preparation checklist, then flip the switch to watch his candle – and everyone's faces – light up!

You might expect to pay hundreds for a creation of this quality, but *Charlie* can be yours for only 4 interest-free instalments of £29.99. Thats a total of just £119.96 (plus £9.99 S&S)*. It is accompanied by a Certificate of Authenticity and our famous 365-day money-back guarantee. Pay nothing now – simply complete and return your Priority Order Form today!

Measures 14 inches (35.5 cm) in height and poseable. This Collector's Edition is not a toy, but a fine collectable; not intended for children under 14.

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